

## CHAPTER IX

### BUDDY TALKING: PHALANXES AND CLUSTERS

As noted previously, teachers sometimes allow children to depart from the prescribed line social formation (Bossert, 1979, p. 38-40), and as children get older, teachers may allow them to walk in the hallway in groups (Best, 1983). These hallway groupings have not been explored in detail by researchers, even though they have the potential to reveal aspects of children's social interactions.

The two varieties of groupings initiated by children in the school hallway, phalanxes and clusters, are different from one another in several ways. These discontinuities, discovered through my observations and interviewing children, are outlined and the distinctions between these and the social formation in the previous chapter, the line, are considered. Following the contrasts between these social formations, specific aspects of the phalanx and cluster are discussed separately. This chapter concludes by examining the commonality that unites phalanxes and clusters: autonomously initiated social interaction.

#### Distinctions Among Lines, Phalanxes, and Clusters

How are the three primary social formations in the hallway different from one another? They can be distinguished by external physical appearance, differences in function, frequency in the hallway, and several other characteristics.

#### Physical Distinctions

The physical appearances of lines, phalanxes, and clusters are different. As has been noted previously, the phalanx is more or less a straight row of people side by side, usually walking in a single direction. I find it interesting that teachers who insist on straight lines often meet with disgruntled acquiescence from children, yet the large majority of phalanxes are extremely straight with no prompting from any outsider. Phalanxes can be easily contrasted with lines because those involved walk side by side, usually facing in a common direction, in contrast with the line where people are behind one another facing the same direction.

The Line: [ [ [ [ [ [ ----->

The Phalanx:

[ ----->  
[ ----->  
[ ----->

Another contrast with the line is that the phalanx is, by definition, an *interactive* phenomenon; two people facing the same direction next to one another can occur by chance, and indeed I observed this on numerous occasions, but the lack of social interaction--either verbal by talking or nonverbal by facing one another or making gestures--almost inevitably results in the two persons not staying together. Also, phalanxes and clusters differ from lines because they are *autonomously* formed by peers, in contrast with lines, which are imposed by teachers.

The phalanx can also be physically contrasted with the cluster. While people in a phalanx all face the same direction, the cluster is marked by people more or less facing one another. Although individuals in a cluster may face one another directly, at 180 degree angles, 90 degree angles do occur, and indeed a wide variety of angles between 0 degrees (the prototypical phalanx) and 180 degrees are generally observed, particularly in multiple person clusters.

Two Person 180 Degree Cluster: [ ]

Two Person 90 Degree Cluster: [

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Three Person 90 Degree Cluster:

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### Distinctions in Function

The functions of these social formations can also be contrasted. In most cases a goal of participants in the phalanx is movement toward a presumed destination, although that function may not be the primary concern of participants. For example, children in a school hallway may be in a phalanx moving toward a classroom, but the principal concern is talking about something that happened earlier in the day. Thus another function of the phalanx is shared with the cluster, that of social interaction with another person. This is considered in detail later in this chapter.

Because interaction is important to the phalanx, this social formation requires that participants maintain not only a common trajectory, facing the destination, but also a common alignment, staying side by side. Without a fairly close alignment, the second function of the phalanx, social interaction, becomes more difficult as the phalanx begins to approximate the shape of a line. Maintaining this alignment requires monitoring the position of other members of the phalanx and adjusting the speed of walking. It is an amazing feat that children can perform this monitoring and adjustment simultaneously with ongoing conversation.

In contrast, nearly all clusters involve no movement in space, although occasionally a cluster shifts location somewhat and a variation of the phalanx, the walking backward phalanx, occurs when two adjacent phalanxes constitute a moving cluster:

[ ] ----->

[ ] ----->

[ ] ----->

### Frequencies of Social Formations

Lines, phalanxes, and clusters can also be distinguished by relative frequency in the hallways. I examined frequencies subsequent to data collection by observing videotapes made in the Pellegrini elementary hallway.

Seven ten minute time periods were selected during periods of high hallway activity or major transitions. The days selected were near the end of March, approximately halfway through the study, during the phase when I purposefully set out to find phalanxes and clusters and follow them in detail with the videocamera. I compared three segments of a more formal morning

transition, with two segments of a more informal, afternoon transition, and two segments of the transition prior to the beginning of school. I estimate that three hundred children were observed participating in these lines, clusters, and phalanxes. Forty-four of these phalanxes and clusters were selected for analysis of size, sex, ethnicity, duration, and other characteristics in subsequent sections of this chapter; the targeted social formations included 106 children. These clusters and phalanxes were selected from the total because they occurred in full view of the camera for nearly all of their duration. To calculate total frequencies *all* clusters and phalanxes observed at any time during these time periods are included, although detailed analysis includes only the targeted social groups. The data are considered only suggestive because of sampling limitations, although even limited samples can have exploratory value (McCall & Simmons, 1969, pp. 238-239). These might be considered "propositions requiring less rigorous procedures" than central propositions in research (McCall, 1969). Observed frequencies represent only three transitions in one school on two adjacent days. Table Two summarizes the frequencies of all social formations observed during the seven ten-minute segments.

What is consistent across most of the observations is that there are more phalanxes than clusters in the hallway during these times. The only exception was during the first before-school observation, which occurred about one-half hour before the beginning of school; at this time most of the children in the hallway were in sitting phalanxes and clusters, which were not tabulated because these variations of the social formations could not be reliably distinguished from one another in the long strings of

observation      lines      phalanxes      clusters  
*Morning formal transition, March 24, 1994*

1	5	10	3
2	4	25	3
3	1	9	4

*Afternoon informal transition, March 24, 1994*

1	0	9	5
2	2	30	6

*Early morning transition prior to school, March 25, 1994*

1	0	2	5
2	0	23	6

Table 2. Frequencies of Social Formations from Videotape

<u>Time</u>	<u>lines</u>	<u>phalanxes</u>	<u>clusters</u>
lunch	2.4	8.8	0.7
early afternoon	0.5	7.3	0.3
afternoon t.w.	1.5	9.0	3.0
late afternoon	0.0	6.5	0.5
after school	0.3	17.0	1.0

Table 3. Frequencies of Social Formations from Field Notes

children sitting next to the walls. Another trend was for lines to be less frequent than phalanxes during all transitions, although lines exceeded clusters during the formal transition but not during the informal transition. This predominance of lines over clusters is a mark of formal transitions I also observed while collecting data, although I do not believe phalanxes always predominated over lines; I recall a few formal transitions when lines were the only social formations observed in the hallway. Phalanxes increased at the tail of the informal transition, a finding consistent with observations in my field notes. In the videotape sample, phalanxes decreased during the tail of the formal transition. Clusters slightly increased at the end of all three transitions, although this increase may not be significant.

Stability of membership in phalanxes and clusters was also examined in the videotape sample. Membership in both phalanxes and clusters was fairly consistent. Seventy-five percent of girls' clusters and the same percentage of boys' clusters did not add or subtract members throughout the length of the social formation. Similarly 76% of girls' phalanxes did not change in number throughout the span of the phalanx, while 88% of boys' phalanxes did not lose or add members.

The overall frequency statistics can be compared with quasi-statistical data from my field notes from the second day of observations. During that afternoon I attempted to count every phalanx, cluster, and line I observed, though in the context of taking notes on other activities as well. For analysis, I break the afternoon notations on lines into four groupings: the lunch transition window (11:40 AM to 1:10 PM), the early afternoon (1:10-1:50), the afternoon transition window (1:50-2:10), late afternoon (2:10-2:30), and after school (2:30-3:00). The mean for each of the three social formations over a ten-minute period is calculated. These are summarized in Table Three.

These data indicate that phalanxes consistently outnumber lines and clusters throughout the afternoon, as they did in the videotape data. Furthermore, during the lunch transition lines outnumber clusters, which makes sense because most of the children go to and from the cafeteria in lines at this time.

Comparing the afternoon transition window quasi-statistical data with the data collected from the videotape during this same transition window, quite different results are obtained. Most obvious is that the quasi-statistical data are lower, probably reflecting the tendency to overlook some data, particularly phalanxes and clusters, while recording data on these social formations and other information. Another explanation is that other factors explain the difference, such as seasonal variation (February 10 versus March 24). However, consistencies do occur between these two sets of data: phalanxes are always more frequent than clusters, and clusters are more frequent than lines. These relative similarities using the different methods of field note observations and counting from videotapes and the different times of year suggest that the *relative* differences between the different social formations are genuine. Triangulating different methods with different data at different times and obtaining consistent results indicate evidence of qualitative validity, though absolute numerical values of each data source may be questionable. Again, both the quasi-statistical data and videotape sampling procedure have serious limitations and are suggestive of likely relative differences (Barton & Lazarsfeld, 1969). More exhaustive collection and analysis of data, preferably including data from other sites as well, are needed before more definitive conclusions can be reached.

### **Size, Sex, Ethnicity, and Duration of Clusters and Phalanxes**

Using the select sample of forty-four clusters and phalanxes, three separate groups were formed: twelve clusters, twenty-five phalanxes, and seven groups that changed from phalanx to cluster or vice versa, denoted "alternating." As noted previously, some of the data on each of these social formations are considered in later sections of this chapter; only number, sex, and ethnicity of participants, as well as duration of the groups, are compared here.

The number of children in phalanxes and clusters varied from two to four in this sample, although I recall observing phalanxes and clusters of six or more at times while collecting data. However, I think that the range of the sample does represent the most typical numbers in these groupings. The number sometimes varied within each of these social formations, as children would leave or join the group after it had formed. The maximum size at any one point in time is used in my calculations.

The twelve clusters studied averaged 2.3 members each (boys = 2.3, girls = 2.4), while the twenty-five phalanxes had a mean of 2.4 (boys = 2.5, girls = 2.4), and the alternating groups averaged 2.6 (boys = 2.0, girls = 2.8). Thus the alternating groups, marked by changes from one

social formation to the other, were the largest overall groups, and this is particularly striking when these averages are compared with girls' averages in the other two kinds of groups; all but two of the alternating groups were girls' groups. Do more girls in a group result in more changes from one kind of group to another, or do the changes from one kind of group to another result in more girls being involved? Or does some other factor produce both phenomena? These are questions beyond the scope of descriptive research, but the association of a greater number of girls in groups that change may relate to the fluid changing of friendships among elementary children (Davies, 1982, pp. 66-70) and the shifting alliances particularly common among girls at this age (Thorne, 1993, p. 94). This assumes, of course, that these numerical differences are statistically significant, and that is open to question because of the size and representativeness limitations of the sample. Perhaps as meaningful as these descriptive data is the modal size of the groups. The most recurring size of phalanxes and clusters was two person groups, although boys' phalanxes were bimodal at two and three persons; the mode for the two alternating groups of boys was two; and the mode for girls' alternating groups was three. Groups of two predominated, although groups of three were also common.

Seventeen of the twenty-five phalanxes consisted of all girls, the other eight were all boys. Eight clusters were all girls, while four were all boys. Five of the alternating groups were all girls, while two were all boys. None of the forty-four groups was a mixed-sex group, although I did occasionally observe these both while collecting data and in a few phalanxes and clusters observed on the videotape that could not be included in the targeted sample. The separation of sexes is clearly marked in these social formations.

African American children participated in 9 of the 44 phalanxes, clusters, and alternates, which constitutes 20% of these groups. White children were in 42 of the 44 groups studied; 95% of phalanxes, clusters, and alternates. Thus 35 of the 44 groups were exclusively white children, while 2 of 44 were exclusively African American, and 7 were mixed-race groups. There was a gender interaction across kinds of groups: within phalanxes only boys had racially blended groups and the only exclusively African American phalanx consisted of all girls. In contrast, the only racially blended cluster consisted of all girls. No cluster of boys was exclusively African American or racially blended. Two racially blended groups were found in alternating groups, both of them consisting of girls.

This suggests that racial integration among older elementary children at Pellegrini elementary is considerable, yet distinct to different social forms by sex. Boys in phalanxes are more likely to include members of different races than girls, while girls are more likely to include members of different races in clusters than are boys. These conclusions are tentative because of lack of statistical tests, sample limitations, and the small number of boys' groups in the interaction cells; only four clusters and only two alternating groups.

Duration of these social groups also varied considerably. I was confronted with an important decision in calculating the duration of phalanxes, clusters, and alternating phalanxes-clusters. Sometimes social formations would develop, disperse for a few seconds, then resume. This occurred for numerous reasons, such as pausing to obtain a drink of water or look at something. Should these momentary dispersions be considered separations such that the previous social form and the later one are two different groups, or should they be considered one group with a disruption? Because invariably the two groupings consisted of the same children, I decided to consider them one social formation, but in calculating duration I did not include the intervening time spent apart from the social formation. Table Four summarizes the mean durations in seconds of phalanxes, clusters, and alternating groups.

These data indicate that clusters last longer, which is not surprising as phalanxes are constrained by time; they often end when the destination is reached. The longer durations of alternating groups can similarly be explained by the time taken to change from one social formation to another, and the minimum duration to define a phalanx ruled out a few groups that could not be considered alternating groups because a phalanx-like structure during the group failed to meet the five second time criterion. Again, the limitations noted for racial groups are relevant; these data are only suggestive, not definitive even for the school site studied.

In contrast in my observation notes I emphasized the comparative lack of phalanxes and clusters in the early elementary wing. Although they did occur, they were rare because children were almost always in line formations whenever they went through the early elementary school

hallway. One teacher during the member check complained about how the lines in the early elementary grades were much straighter and better behaved than in the later elementary grades. I concur that the younger children conformed to the line rules to a greater extent. I wonder if that was because of greater dependence by younger children on teachers, because of the less likelihood of children being in the hall for physical necessity, restrooms and drinking fountains being inaccessible from the halls as they were in the older elementary wing, and because early elementary children were given recess periods with free play. My

*Mean Duration (in seconds):*

Phalanxes (N=25)	18.0	(range = 7 to 36)
Boys (N=8)	20.2	
Girls (N=17)	16.9	
Clusters (N=12)	26.5	(range = 4 to 65)
Boys (N=4)	26.0	
Girls (N=8)	26.8	
Alternating (N=7)	32.3	(range = 15 to 45)
Boys (N=2)	28.5	
Girls (N=5)	33.8	

Table 4. Durations of Phalanxes, Clusters, and Alternating Groups



observation notes on this issue suggest that the most important element was that there were fewer children in the early elementary hallway during the day, so there was less likelihood that two children who were friends would be in the hallway at the same time; opportunities for the social interaction implicit to the development of phalanxes and clusters did not exist.

### Summation

Were there other differences among phalanxes, clusters, and the groups that alternated? I have a hunch the discussions held in clusters were more sophisticated than in phalanxes. I think this is the case because full or nearly full attention can be placed on talking in clusters, while in phalanxes part of the attention is diverted by movement adjustments to maintain the phalanx, as well as the need to watch for obstacles while walking. Perhaps the longer duration of clusters also implies more in-depth interaction in these formations. Other subtle differences were also revealed in my interviews with children, to be examined shortly. I am sure there are other distinctions as well, not uncovered in the present research study, that await further explorations of my videotaped data and research of other sites.

### The Phalanx

A more precise definition of the phalanx is warranted. *A phalanx is two or more people side by side, usually facing the same direction and moving at least temporarily toward some presumed destination. Those in this formation maintain a fairly consistent adjacency for at least five seconds and manifest some kind of interaction through one person facing the other or engaging in some variety of verbal or nonverbal communication.* This definition was derived from my observations, although the rudiments of the definition were present as early as the first day of observing. The term "phalanx" is taken from a very brief and somewhat different description by Schefflen (1976, pp. 101-102). The military connotations of defensive or offensive combat are not necessarily assumed in the school context.

The phalanx is almost never described in the research literature and never by this terminology. Thorne (1993, p. 73) describes the phalanx as a "row" and other researchers may include it in the designation "groups," although they more likely designate the cluster social formation. Those who have observed the phalanx may consider it one and the same with the cluster, as did some of the children in my study, in spite of its clearly distinctive external appearance. It seems odd to me that such a common social grouping, found in many kinds of hallways, on the street, in shopping malls, and many other places, has not received systematic study and analysis. Its analog, the line or queue, has received more study, but that research is confined to the fringes of the social science disciplines. That exclusion to the periphery may have hindered further research interest in both of these social formations.

Thorne (1993, pp. 72-73) describes a kind of phalanx she calls a "troupe." Groups of two to six girls walked side by side around the playground she studied, seeking things to do, primarily chasing boys. Usually a well developed, tall and large-breasted, girl was at the center of the troupe, and often troupes were interracial. Sometimes these girls used stylized motions as they walked, including dance steps and snapping fingers rhythmically. Occasionally these troupes disrupted boys engaged in play. Thorne says that these phalanxes of girls blended power with sexuality. One of the fourth grade groups I interviewed had three girls I could easily envision being a troupe if they had recess, and children in other groups described them in ways similar to that of Thorne.

My observation notes suggest that phalanxes are most likely to develop at entryways to classrooms, the inside and outside doors, drinking fountains, and restrooms. They also emerge from lines, I noted. But I also emphasized that they can develop anywhere in the hallway and at any time.

In the sample of 25 phalanxes studied from videotapes, I found that the single most common place where this social form developed was when children left their classrooms, although meeting in the hall, developing at the end of a line, and forming at the restroom doorway were also common. More rare were phalanxes that developed at the inner door, from sitting in the hallway, and at the drinking fountain.

A substantial majority of the phalanxes in the videotape sample terminated on arrival at a classroom doorway. A few dispersed when children came to the doorway to the middle section of the school, and occasionally children ended a phalanx to enter the restroom or as children went in different directions. Even less common endpoints for the phalanx were when one member sat down

in the hall, going through the door to the middle area of the school, and walking around my camera. One time I observed a phalanx break rank when a teacher made a "shhh" noise in the direction of the phalanx. One three-person phalanx slowed down but did not end when one girl stopped to get a drink, then resumed its original speed when she caught up with it.

I was surprised to find a number of affectionate behaviors in my videotape sample of phalanxes. Of twenty-five phalanxes, affectionate actions occurred in four. These included girls rubbing shoulders against one another, the middle girl in a phalanx of three putting her arms around the others, and an African American boy leaning on and putting his arm around a white boy. On one occasion a girl briefly touched a boy not in the phalanx.



### Phalanx Variations

Several variations of the phalanx occurred in my observations. The most typical form of the phalanx was the *walking* phalanx. The walking phalanx, in turn, varied in speed apparently because of the perceived urgency in arriving at the destination. A second variation was the *uneven* phalanx, although variations of this nature were minor; most phalanxes were quite straight. One of my observation notes suggests that boys tended to be less concerned with keeping a phalanx straight than girls.

A third variation was the *stationary* phalanx, which usually involved standing next to a wall or even leaning against a wall. At one point in my observations I considered calling this a "pseudo-phalanx," but eventually dismissed this idea because the stationary phalanx had all the properties of any other nonmoving phalanx. However, the stationary phalanx was difficult to analyze because dozens of children might be standing against a single wall--usually developed by a line where each child turned 90 degrees--and I could not always determine where one phalanx separated from the next. Standing phalanxes were not included in earlier frequency counts.

A fourth variation is the *sitting* phalanx. This could be produced by children in a line sitting down and thus composing the sitting equivalent of a stationary phalanx, or it could develop from the more sporadic arrival of children at a location. This was particularly likely when children entered the hallway prior to the beginning of the school day.

A fifth variation of the phalanx is a *running* phalanx. When children in a phalanx began to run, this quickly terminated the social formation because a competitive race ensued rather than concern for alignment. However, when children, usually girls, held hands in a running phalanx, the social formation could continue although in the only example found in my observation notes, even

the hand-holding running phalanx soon dispersed.

### **Purposes of Phalanxes**

Previously in this chapter I contrasted the manifest functions of the phalanx with the cluster. While we watched videotapes of phalanxes in the interview groups, I asked children about the purposes of phalanxes.

One group of third-grade girls commented, as they watched the tape,

[Sue]: They're walking together.

[Annie]: Friends walkin' together.

[Donna]: They're fightin'.

[Annie]: Talkin'.

[Sue]: We're at break.

Fifth-grade boys gave me their views during the tape:

[DR]: Why do they do that? Who do they get in those rows?

[John]: To talk to each other. Better to be by your side

[DR]: But you can talk to each other in a line. So why would you get in a row?

[John]: 'Cause it's easier to talk. You get away with it.

[DR]: Any other reasons?

[Tom]: Just to be around your friends.

A fourth-grade group suggested that the basic reason for being in a phalanx was to simply be next to one another for "a friendly walk." Fifth graders talked about confidences that could be shared in a phalanx. Third graders also noted that sometimes phalanxes indicated a boyfriend and girlfriend pairing, and this may explain why so few mixed-sex phalanxes were observed. Several fourth-grade boys noted that some of their peers sexualized all such groups: "Dirty-minded kids say that girls side by side are lesbians and queens."

Third-grade girls were sensitive about their smaller size compared with other children in the hallway. Thus the phalanx might be a means of protection. One of them told me:

All your friends would be together. Maybe the big kids wouldn't run over you. 'Cause you got lots of people with you.

Another reason for the phalanx was suggested by a multiple race and sex group of fourth graders. They suggested that they could walk slowly through the hall in a phalanx and spread out, taking up the entire width of the hallway. I believe they were suggesting that the phalanx could potentially be a means of dominance over others in the hallway; other groups of girls in their class complained several times about the power exercised by the African American girls in this group.

Overall, children emphasized the social nature of the phalanx as the primary purpose, not arrival at the destination. The walking-in-phalanx formation clearly indicates that travel is important, but the kids' comments focused on interaction probably because they were attempting to describe why they would travel in a phalanx

rather than walk alone. When I later asked them about the meanings of a phalanx, considered later in this section, the social emphasis again came through clearly.

### **Is the Phalanx Preferred?**

[DR]: Would you rather be [in a phalanx] or in a straight line?

[Dora]: I'd rather be in a straight line.

[Sandy]: Uh huh.

[DR]: You'd rather be in a straight line?

[Dora]: Because it doesn't seem like we're actin' like fourth graders, we're actin' like kindergartners.

Although most of the interview groups preferred phalanxes over being alone or in line, I was surprised that several groups of children said they preferred not to be in phalanxes. The fourth-grade girls in the group quoted above associated phalanxes with disobedience and not setting a good example for others.

[Dora]: Rather be in a straight line. To be an example for the kindergartners. . . . I don't think that's right to be side by side. They think it should be right to follow the rules.

[Sandy]: If you could be side by side and not get in trouble, I would.

[DR]: Let's say a teacher didn't have that rule against it. Then would you rather be side by side or in a line?

[Sandy]: If we knew we wouldn't be in trouble, it would be all right. . . .

[Dora]: I like to be ABC order [in line] because my best friend is behind me. But I have to be behind [a boy]. He likes to push and run down the hall.

Some fifth-grade boys gave similar reasons for not being in a phalanx. This comment came in the context of a discussion of a videotape segment of girls in a phalanx, and one of the boys had commented that "Girls do that . . . can hardly get down the hall."

[Tim]: I don't think it's polite to be like that.

[DR]: It's not polite.

[Sam]: No, in a row like that, take somebody else's room.

But as I probed further, I found that politeness could become secondary when they wanted some fun at others' expense. They speak of phalanxes outdoors:

[Sam]: Cut somebody off. We do that. Little kids try to get by, we just stop real fast.

[Dave]: They all pile up against the little trap, and [we] make them go around on the grass.

[Tim]: Make 'em go around, just to be mean.

Several children commented that sometimes phalanxes were appropriate and sometimes they were not.[DR]: You said sometimes you wouldn't want to be in a row. When wouldn't you wanna be in a row?

[Beth]: Like when you're mad or something. Mad at your friends.

[DR]: Are there any other times you wouldn't want to be in a row?

[Amy]: You might not want to be in a row if there's nobody out there you know.

Fourth-grade girls emphasized that phalanxes were inappropriate at the end of the school day because it was important for those trying to get to a bus to move past others in the hall. But they admitted that lines to the buses were boring.

Most children, however, preferred the phalanx to the line or being alone in the hallway. They often emphasized the limited time available during school hours to talk with their friends.

### **Feelings While in the Phalanx**

I attempted to enter the children's perspectives by asking them how it felt to be in a phalanx. Although many of the children talked about being happy in the phalanx because they were with their friends, some mentioned less positive feelings. One third-grade group of boys said their feelings depended on who was with them in the phalanx. A fourth-grade girl commented that she could feel mad in a phalanx because others were talking about her; in disgust, another member of the group responded to her, "Oh, please!" Third-grade girls thought sadness and pain as well as happiness were possible:

[DR]: What are your feelings when you're in a row?

[Judy]: You're so happy 'cause you're with your friends. And they been nice enough to walk with you. You're glad to see 'em.

[Pam]: You might be sad. 'Cause somebody might have died in your family, and they might keep you company. Try to cheer you up.

[Brenda]: Or if you hurt yourself, you might need to be in a row.

[Judy]: To help ya.

Fourth graders in one group spoke of a variety of emotions, including happiness, freedom, and the possibility of showing emotions to a greater extent. In contrast, "Kids step on your heels in line." Fifth-grade girls talked about feeling hungry or angry in a phalanx. Usually phalanxes were not boring, commented a fourth-grade boy. Overall, positive feelings were predominant. Kids like phalanxes. Third graders in blended race group said they felt happy, cool, bad, excited, and "as

good as anybody else" when they were in the phalanx. "Rows are fun," concluded a fifth grader.

### **Position in a Phalanx**

In a two-person phalanx walking on the right side of the hallway, one person is closer to the wall and the other is near the middle of the hall. In a three-person phalanx, someone is in the middle. Does position in a phalanx make a difference to children? I asked fifth-grade boys:

[DR]: If you're in a row, would you rather be in the middle or one of the sides?

[Stan]: Ends, 'cause ya don't get squished there. Get squished in the middle, especially if there is a bunch of 'em ...

[DR]: Would you rather be on the side next to the wall or side that's in the middle?

[Bob]: Side next to the wall.

[DR]: Why's that?

[Bob]: 'Cause ya get to push at em.

[DR]: OK. So you push at the others in the row?

[Bob]: Yeah. You walk to push if they start ta squishin' ya.

[DR]: No one would rather be in the middle?

[Stan]: Get squished.

This concern for being "squished" in the middle was common among the children. One child commented that the middle was also unpleasant if others in the phalanx smelled bad. Yet some third-grade girls saw both an advantage and a drawback to being in the middle.

[DR]: Where would you want to be in a row?

[Simca]: On the outside, so you wouldn't be squished.

[Velma]: In the middle.

[DR]: Why the middle?

[Velma]: Don't know.

[Wilma]: 'Cause you're beside both of your friends.

[DR]: Any other reason?

[Simca]: If you wanted to tell your friend something, maybe they wouldn't have to tell the other person if they were on each side.

[Velma]: She wouldn't have to move around to get in the middle.

Other positions had their drawbacks as well. A third-grade girl spoke of the end in the middle of the hall being bumped by other people. Fourth-grade girls found problems with all three positions.

[DR]: Would you rather be in the middle or at the end?

[Mandy]: In the middle because people at the ends get squished.

[Freda]: Squished.

[Cindy]: But I'd like to be at the end because I'd get squished in the middle.

[DR]: So you'd get squished in the middle, but the ends get shoved too.

[all]: Yeah.

[DR]: Which is the best?

[Freda]: I'd say at the end.

[Cindy]: The end. Up side of the wall.

[DR]: Would that be better?

[Cindy]: 'Cause they couldn't get you.

[Freda]: Side of the wall you'd hurt your head.

[Cindy]: Or break it.

[DR]: So you'd rather be at the side of the hallway?

[Cindy]: I don't know.

Several other groups also spoke of the danger of scraping the wall while moving down the hall in a phalanx. Greater safety came from being in the middle, some said.

The third-grade romantic group of boys fantasized about being in a phalanx with girls.

[Dan]: I'd like to be in the middle with two girls, put my arm around each.

[Sam]: And kiss one!

[Bill]: I wouldn't want to be in the middle with my friends.

One fourth-grade boy mentioned that he liked the middle because he could more easily talk to both of the others in the phalanx, but a peer responded that he could see both of the friends at the same time more easily from an end position. A third-grade girl commented that she liked to be next to the wall so she could see the artwork better.

Overall, what position did children prefer? There was no consensus. I got the impression that children had not given this issue much thought prior to my interviews. There was a slight edge for wanting to be in the middle among girls, but this may not have been a significant majority. There was considerable disagreement among groups and within groups, and several changed their opinions while talking about the issue, but in a consistent direction.

### **Do Teachers Make a Difference?**

Children believed that the presence of certain teachers in the hallway would contraindicate the presence of phalanxes. Several children named specific teachers as being very likely to punish them if they were found in a phalanx, while other teachers named would almost always tolerate this social formation. The circumstances could also make a difference. Many of these themes, offered by several of my groups, are summarized by the comments of several third-grade girls:

[DR]: Are rows different when a teacher is around?

[Samantha]: Yes.

[Toni]: And no. We still talk.

[Shawna]: They really are [different] ...

[Jeana]: No they're not.

[Shawna]: You can tell secrets, and teachers won't get on to you. If you're talkin' real loud, it will make a difference ...

[Samantha]: I don't think you'd be in a row if the teacher was out there because you're supposed to be in line.

[Toni]: But not if you're comin' back from PE.

[Shawna]: In a subject [going from one classroom to another] you're usually in a row, not a line. . . .

[DR]: Does it make a difference *what* teacher is there?

[Toni]: There's some mean teachers and some nice teachers.

[Samantha]: We were walking and telling secrets, and Mrs. Glynn get on to us maybe.

[DR]: How about other teachers?

[Jeana]: Might not bother you.

Fifth-grade boys commented,

[Dan]: You can't be in a row like that, gotta be in a line.

[Zack]: Unless it's break.

[DR]: Oh, they allow it at break.

[Randy]: Yeah, but ya can't talk.

[Zack]: Ya ain't supposed to, but. . . .

[Randy]: Everybody does it.

Several children commented that they were more likely to have phalanxes with a substitute teacher than with their regular teacher. One fifth grader commented that her teacher allowed quiet children to walk in phalanxes.

### **What Happens in Phalanxes?**

I asked children to list some of the activities most commonly found in phalanxes. These are summarized in Figure Fourteen. Because phalanxes are

	<b>All Girls Group</b>		<b>All Boys Group</b>		<b>Mixed Sex and Race Group</b>
	<b>WHITE</b>	<b>BLEND</b>	<b>WHITE</b>	<b>BLEND</b>	
<b>Third Grade</b>	tell secrets holding hands walking talking fussing listening to teachers laugh sing/hum tell news fix hair		fighting dipping tobacco	fighting get hurt laughing tripping give you five cussing breaking friendship	passing talking playing ramming into each other hold hands
<b>Fourth Grade</b>	group one: talking about others fighting fussing dancing clogging hitting playing with hair  group three: fighting getting hurt going to lunch begin or end a relationship			pushing fighting getting hurt kicking tripping punching pushing passing	playing talking fighting punching shoving accidental bumping swinging arms jumping
<b>Fifth Grade</b>	talking laughing boys fight get mad	talking fighting cutting up looking mean	talking playing around stabbed by pencil getting cut down offered cigarettes	fighting arguing running racing jumping	

Figure 14. Activities in Phalanxes According to Children

relationship oriented, many of the activities listed may imply interaction. Boys' groups and mixed-sex groups listed many of the activities described in earlier sessions, especially those that involved breaking school rules. By far the most commonly mentioned activity was fighting, probably rough-and-tumble play with one another and perhaps aggression against others outside the phalanx. Many of the activities are relational activities that involve aggression, real or pretend. One of the few affectionate comments, holding hands, was offered in a mixed-sex group, probably by a girl.

In contrast to the aggressive relational terms of the boys and mixed-sex groups, consider the responses of the white girls' groups. Although fighting was among the most commonly mentioned activities in the phalanx by these girls, it was equaled by comments about talking. In addition they often narrowed the use of the term to emphasize verbal disagreements, such as "fights because people are talkin' about other people" or specifically designating fighting as a boy activity. Nonaggressive activities predominate, although many of the descriptors are clearly relational in orientation.

In sum, white girls emphasize activities in phalanxes that are less aggressive and more clearly relational than other groups of children. Boys and mixed-sex groups emphasize more aggressive, yet still relationship-oriented terminology. Mixed-sex groups gave responses more like boys' groups probably because girls who choose boys to be in their group are more likely to have commonalities with boys; no boys chose girls to be in their groups.

### **Phalanxes are for Gays?**

One group of fifth-grade girls told me that boys are not in phalanxes as much as girls. They complained that the boys teased girls about being in phalanxes, even accusing them of being gay. A third-grade group of girls made similar comments when I asked about holding hands in phalanxes.

[DR]: I've noticed that sometimes girls will hold hands when they're in a row together.

[Pam]: That's usual.

[DR]: But boys don't do that, do they?

[all]: No!

[DR]: Why?

[Teri]: Some little kids do.

[Pam]: Boys, they think they're cool and everything. They think they're sissy if they're holding hands.

[Teri]: Some boys in sixth grade, they see we're holdin' hands, they say we're gay. They're silly.

[DR]: But you think it's ok for girls.

[Teri]: They're crazy.

[Pam]: It's ok for boys if they want to do it.

[Teri]: The boys think it's crazy. They think it's just for girls.

The potential for accusations of being gay may explain why I found fewer phalanxes among boys than girls in my observations.

### **The Meanings of Phalanxes to Children**

When I asked the children in my interview groups what phalanxes meant to them, they emphasized that phalanxes meant friendship. Fifth-grade boys told me, "Somebody's cool. Somebody to talk to." "It's like a club," said a third-grade boy. "We need friends, ya can't live without them," he added. "You feel bad if you're not with your friends," said a fifth-grade girl. Happiness and gladness were associated with phalanxes, several other groups told me. It also says something about a child's interpersonal skills, a third-grade girl told me:

[DR]: If you thought about being in a row, what would it mean to you?

[Jamie]: Feels gooooooooood!

[DR]: Feels good, OK. But what does it mean to you?

[Jamie]: If you're in a row with friends, it probably means you have friends.

Yet not everyone was enthusiastic about being in a phalanx. A third-grade group of boys spoke of how teachers believed phalanxes were wrong and bad. Apparently the fear of being



discovered in this forbidden social formation took the joy out of it for them. A third-grade African American boy in another group, when asked what phalanxes meant to him, said "scaredness." He explained that bullies might be in a phalanx and they could hurt him. When others in his group commented that the most important thing they had said during the session was how important it was to be with other people in a phalanx, he commented, "I ain't got no friends."

### Teachers' Views

I asked teachers at the conclusion of the study about their views of phalanxes. Several teachers expressed some tolerance for this social formation, while others saw it as a problem that should always be discouraged. The diversity of views was interesting: two teachers were negative about the social formation, and three were more positive.

Why do teachers dislike phalanxes? The talking that usually takes place can be disturbing to others, and there is little time to talk in the hallway, one teacher commented. Another commented on the amount of space a phalanx takes in the hall. She also thought phalanxes cause fights among children. She briefly described a boy who was trampled because kids in a phalanx were not watching where they were going. A third teacher also commented on the problem of talking and emphasized the possibility of children ganging up on others if phalanxes were freely allowed.

Those who were more open to this social formation emphasized that because adults walked in phalanxes, children should be permitted this as well. One teacher said it would be acceptable only in the school hallway after school, but during school hours, lines were needed for "logistics." Another commented that phalanxes were not "that big of a deal," unless they spanned the entire width of the hallway or a child walked backward in a phalanx and accidentally ran into someone else. A third commented that phalanxes did not always create problems and, in spite of its difficulties, she did not get "bent out of shape" with this social formation and its associated talking. "I talk to other teachers" in hallway phalanxes, she admitted, so it was hard to forbid this arrangement absolutely among children.

What do teachers think phalanxes mean to children? Teachers used terms such as friendship, togetherness, and being buddies to describe this meaning. The social interaction involved is clear to teachers.

### Summation

A phalanx means friends and friendships. Phalanxes are an expression of peer culture. Yet phalanxes are often discouraged by teachers and sometimes by homophobic peers. Perhaps the suspicions of the latter result in boys' associating the phalanx with aggressive activities; rough-and-tumble play and other aggressiveness in the phalanx may be a means of avoiding accusations of being gay, yet such play results in socially acceptable interpersonal touch. The "f" sound in phalanx stands for friendship.

### The Cluster

*A cluster involves two or more people arranged in some resemblance to a circle, semicircle, right angle, or opposite one another for the purpose of engaging in social interaction, verbal or nonverbal. Unlike the line and phalanx, the cluster is almost always stationary.* This definition was distilled from the observations described previously in this chapter, although--like the phalanx--the rudiments of the definition were noted on the first day of the study. Initially I attempted to place a minimum time frame for the cluster, but found it was unnecessary; clustering is less likely to be the chance grouping that occurs with phalanxes. School hallway clusters are mentioned in several research studies without a precise definition of their physical characteristics.

Metz (1978, p. 148) describes clusters of children in a middle-school hallway, in which students stop to talk to one another. These clusters obstructed traffic, and clusters can multiply until all movement toward the destination ceases. Excessive talking and noise can ensue, which may interfere with teachers' attempting to talk with students, as well as get on teachers' nerves, says Metz.

Thorne (1993, p. 42) briefly describes lines that became clusters of youngsters separated by spaces in the hallway of the school she studied, groups that usually were composed of same-sex children. In these clusters children played games and other entertaining activities as they waited to

move on to their destination.

Johnson (1985, pp. 54, 56) describes how the classroom environment in the early elementary grades fosters the clustering of children, but notes that such clustering is squelched in the later elementary years. Children in the early grades naturally clustered together as they entered school from the bus (pp. 60, 72, 96). Similarly, children in fifth and sixth grades clustered outside the classroom door in the hallway until the teacher told them to come into the classroom (p. 219). Lower track fifth and sixth graders stood in clusters marked by race rather than sex while waiting for class to begin (p. 226), while girls in an upper track classroom stood in mixed-race clusters. Boys sat down and did not cluster (p. 233).

Goetz (1975) notes that children often formed social clusters and talked quietly as they made their way in the school hallways (p. 109). Small groups of individuals in the hallway of that school aroused little concern by adults (p. 110) in contrast with the extreme concern in the middle school studied by Herrera (1988). Games and free exploration of school hallways were more likely to occur when individuals or small groups of students went unsupervised through the hallways (Goetz, 1975, pp. 110-111). An early study of middle-grade children (Wellman, 1926) indicated that children were most likely to cluster in groups while in hallways during free play or while at lunch.

In my observations I noticed that clusters were very likely to form at the drinking fountain because children talked to one another while getting drinks. This contrasts with my expectation that they would queue at a drinking fountain rather than cluster, yet it is common to observe adults clustered around drinking fountains and coffee dispensers engaged in conversation.

In my videotape sample of twelve clusters, I examined factors that initiated this social formation. Most commonly clusters began when children happened to look and see another person while in the hallway. Sometimes clusters formed at entryways to classrooms, while some also began when children stood up from sitting in the hallway. The drinking fountain initiated a cluster in only one of the twelve targeted cases. I also noticed that one cluster of boys formed after a rough-and-tumble play bout between a girl and one of the boys. Of course clusters can also develop from phalanxes. Five of the seven alternating groups began as phalanxes and became clusters, while three of the twelve clusters became phalanx-like structures, though these were not considered phalanxes because they lasted less than five seconds. Alternating groups most commonly began near classroom entryways.

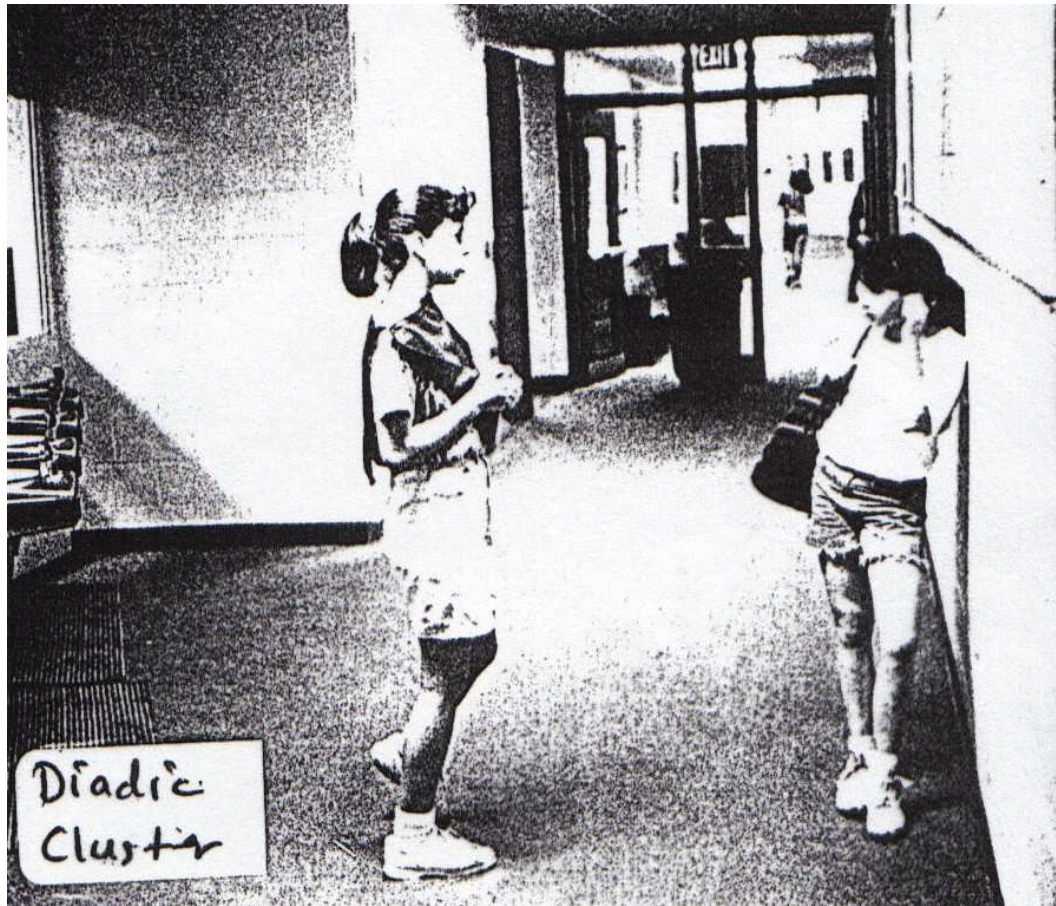
In the videotape sample I examined some of the events that took place during the time span of the cluster. One cluster of girls dispersed when a teacher scolded them, but resumed shortly thereafter. One cluster of boys moved down the hallway. Another cluster of boys did leg splits on the floor and pretended to have a sword fight. On two occasions girls walked slightly away from the cluster, then turned back toward the group. I found it interesting that much less affection occurred in clusters than in phalanxes in the videotape segments. The only affection I saw was one girl placing her head on the shoulder of another girl.

Clusters terminated in several different ways. For example, one of the twelve clusters dissipated as members left one by one. One group ended by the youngsters' sitting on the floor, and another cluster of two just walked in separate directions, continuing to talk until they could not hear one another. The other groups disbanded and walked in different directions without further communication. Most of the groups that alternated between a cluster and phalanx terminated at a doorway, most commonly the restroom or classroom doors.

### **Cluster Variations**

Clusters vary considerably. Previously in this chapter I describe size variations and variations in angles among members; I suspect that 90 to 180 degree angles were the most common, but I have no data to prove this hunch. *Sitting* clusters were observed, particularly before the start of the school day but occasionally at other times. As with sitting phalanxes, it was often difficult if not impossible to tell where a given sitting cluster ended and another sitting cluster or sitting phalanx began. Sometimes nearby children were onlookers or were completely uninvolved, but could change from either of these categories to full participants very quickly. Because of the difficulties of identifying sitting clusters and phalanxes, they were excluded from all tabulations in this chapter. A final variation of the cluster can be identified, the *walking* cluster. This involved one or more children walking backward or sideways to maintain the cluster shape. This happened rarely; usually

children moved into a phalanx position rather than attempting to maintain a walking cluster. As I reflect on the variations of phalanxes and clusters, I am impressed with the comparatively few variations of the cluster in contrast with those of the phalanx, but am at a loss for how to explain this difference or if there is any significance to this difference.



#### **Children's Views of the Purposes for Clusters**

During the fourth session of interviews, I showed an edited videotape of several clusters at different grade levels; editing was necessary because clusters are a less frequent social phenomenon. As children watched the videotapes, they made comments about the purposes of clusters.

The predominant comment was that, like phalanxes, the primary purpose of clusters was interaction and conversation. "They're just chit-chattin'," one third grader commented. Fourth-grade boys thought the children in clusters might be passing notes to one another; I saw no evidence for this, but perhaps they saw something I missed or they were just imaginative. Other reasons for clusters besides general social interaction were mentioned as well. One group of third-grade boys commented during a portrayal of a girls' phalanx that the girls were "blockin' the hall and being brats." Fifth-grade boys responded to the same scene by suggesting the girls were "flirting." Fourth-grade boys opined that those in clusters were simply waiting to change classes; this was an accurate statement, but reflected little consideration of the motivations for the formation of the cluster. Fifth-grade girls suggested that boredom precipitated the cluster or perhaps those in the cluster were a team. They recalled talking about what they were wearing in such a cluster. But the primary emphasis of most of the groups was the talking and social interaction in the cluster.

#### **How Clusters are Different From and Similar to Phalanxes**

After the video concluded, I asked children about similarities and differences between these two social formations. Most of them agreed that there were some differences, although two

groups maintained that there were no differences at all. For the latter groups the external appearance was insignificant.

What distinctions did children make between phalanxes and clusters? Most of the groups said the most predominant difference was the shape: clusters are round rather than straight like phalanxes. However, other distinctions were offered by a few youngsters. Third-grade and fifth-grade girls emphasized that more people could be in a cluster than in a phalanx; the width of the hall constrained the number that could be in a single phalanx. Fifth-grade boys agreed and also commented that they could get by with more misbehavior without being observed by a teacher in a cluster; clusters *can* be more immune from outsider observation. This idea may also be reflected in a comment by fourth-grade girls that they can "hold stuff in your hands in a circle." More talking is possible in clusters, fifth-grade girls noted, perhaps because of less likelihood of being observed or because they last longer. Third-grade boys emphasized that clusters do not move down the hallway. They also suggested that "people rotated in a group, not in a row," and fifth-grade girls similarly commented that clusters had different positions from phalanxes. I failed to get clarification for those comments. They may have been speaking of changing physical position in the cluster or of a person being in numerous clusters but accepted only in a few phalanxes. They may have been pointing to the possibility that phalanxes, by being smaller groups, more clearly indicated *best* friends, while clusters were more inclusive. One group of fifth-grade boys commented:

Sometimes they gang up on people. They'll make a circle and start talkin' bad. Cussin' ... start kickin' big time.

Again, though, the majority of groups focused on the physical shape as distinguishing these two social formations.

How are phalanxes and clusters the same? Fourth-grade girls noted several similarities: children can talk with friends, they both take up space in the hallway, kids get pushed in both, people get in trouble when in either clusters or phalanxes, and both kinds of groupings can "scoot by." Standing next to friends was common to both, noted several third and fourth graders. Third-grade girls commented that more girls than boys participate in both kinds of groupings. But the predominant emphasis was that talking is generic to both, particularly talking with friends. Social interaction was the common linkage.

### **Preference for the Cluster**

I asked the children if they would rather be in a cluster formation or some other arrangement. Because previous sessions had considered both lines and phalanxes, these were alternatives they were likely to have thought about. There was a surprising diversity in the responses. A gender effect could be expected in these responses, as either boys might have declined interest in clusters because of homophobia or girls declined because of the desire to "be nice" and obey the teacher by avoiding clusters. Although there was some evidence for the latter, overall there were few gender differences in responses: both boys' and girls' groups provided divergent responses.

Those that preferred clusters generally emphasized the importance of seeing peers face to face, watching one another during conversations. You could "talk to everyone at once," a fifth grade boy noted. Third graders told me they would be able to talk and "goof off" more in a cluster. The romantically inclined third grade group of boys told me they could hug a girl easier in a cluster! They also thought that a phalanx would only be limited to two people, while a cluster could include four or five friends. Finally these third graders said they could hide drugs easier in a cluster.

Why did children *not* want to be in clusters? Several third grade boys told me:

[Philip]: I'd rather be another way. Rather be running.

[Les]: I'd rather be in a row. Can talk to friends that way. You can't walk in a circle. You can get caught easier in a circle than a row. It's harder to get caught in a line [sic?] than in a circle.

Fourth grade girls said they would rather not be in a cluster because it could "get you into trouble." They also complained about cursing and fighting that could erupt in a cluster, although perhaps a "good" cluster might be ok. Fifth grade girls similarly commented that teachers were more likely to think they were talking or passing notes in a cluster, which could get them in trouble.

### Feelings in a Cluster

What is it like for children participating in a cluster? An African American fourth-grade girl commented, "I be happy and free. No teachers 'round, so I say what I want to." Third graders commented that they would feel relaxed because "the teacher's not there." Another third grader used the term "relieved" to express the same idea. A fifth grader said it would feel "cool" to be in a cluster. Another fifth grader said it would feel pretty good and that some kids might think "nasty thoughts; flirting." Fifth-grade girls emphasized how happy they felt when with friends, because of the assurance "Our secrets are secure."

Some children offered more negative emotions, however. A third-grade boy confided, "I know I'll get caught, uh oh, get busted." He added that he did not think things should be like that; he disliked rules against clusters. Similarly a third-grade boy said he would feel bad because "I might get a paddlin'; bad to the bone." Sometimes peers make fun of others in a cluster, noted a fourth grade boy, and that makes him mad; "You want to hit 'em." Fourth-grade girls said they would feel angry if those in the cluster were cursing, "We'd just walk off." Children might feel sad in a cluster, indicated a third-grade girl, but, "Your friends in the cluster could cheer you up." People feel sad in a cluster when they lose friends, mentioned one fourth-grade girl. A fifth-grade girl also mentioned sadness in a cluster "if somebody's not talking to you."

A wide range of emotions are felt and expressed in clusters. Interactions in groups are not positive for everyone, and groups can be painful for anyone at times. Yet children noted that social groups could potentially be an asset when sad or lonely, assuming the teacher did not threaten the group's existence.

### The Meanings of Clusters

Discovering the meaning of events for children is difficult. Consequences of an event may imply meaning to participants, and because one result of clustering was that children usually remained longer in this social formation than others, this implies that they usually desired extended participation in this social formation. Longer involvement may also imply that a deeper level of interaction occurred in clusters than in phalanxes and lines, because trajectory and alignment concerns associated with movement do not exist in clusters. A deeper level of interaction is also implied by children generally leaving the cluster only at teacher insistence or conclusion of the discussion, not by arrival at the location; a discussion that ends merely because of arrival is less likely to be as complex as a discussion that involves resolution. These implications are speculative, however, because of the absence of verbal data from these groups.

As can be noted throughout this research, I attempted to distill meaning by asking many different kinds of questions, as well as making careful observations. Directly asking children what an event means is sometimes too threatening or too demanding intellectually. During this interview I attempted to get at the meaning of clusters for children by asking "What's it like to be in a circle?"; circle was my term for clusters in the interviews. Because this question followed the discussion of feelings in clusters, many of the responses tended to be affective in content.

"It's fun," said members of several different groups, but "Kind of bad" because they might receive conduct cuts one fifth grader noted. "It's cool . . . you get to talk, it's a reason to be with your friends," said a fifth-grade girl; an almost identical comment was made by a third-grade girl. A third-grade boy believed the cluster was an opportunity to display personal strength: "Got to be a man ... group means a lot, I'm strong, can beat everyone up."

Fourth-grade girls gave it a mixed review. "It's good, just talking, be happy," but also there can be trouble in the cluster, they noted. One third-grade boy told me he had no idea what a cluster was like because "I never been in one." Another boy in his group simply commented, "It don't mean nothin'." A third person in the same group said clusters were fun, but sometimes they made him fearful. One fifth-grade boy responded to my question, "What's it like to be in a group?", by drawing a comparison to a football huddle, his terminology, "All gather around and talk quietly, so others won't know what you say."

### Events in Clusters

The events children describe as occurring in clusters also reveal something about the meaning of this social formation. What do children say happens within clusters? "Anything can

happen: fighting, cussing, laughing ... talking about someone, pushing," noted fifth-grade girls. Another group of fifth-grade girls spoke of secrets being shared and either helping others with homework or at least providing answers to homework assignments. Helping one another, cheering up peers, holding hands, and mutual understanding were underscored by third-grade girls. Youngsters talk about what they did over the weekend and discuss teachers and people they hate, noted several fourth-grade girls. But another fourth-grade group of girls was more negative, as the group quickly listed in quick succession:

[Several girls]: Fights, kicking, punching, eating, cussing, hitting, smacking, hair pulling, jerking things out of your hands.

[Ann]: Circle groups are clubs, and your feelings get hurt in clubs.

Third-grade boys were also quick to emphasize the potential for altercations in clusters, although fifth-grade boys also emphasized secret activities in clusters such as trading knives and food; trading in groups was also mentioned by a fourth grader. While another third-grade group of boys similarly emphasized the potential for fights in or between clusters, they also mentioned that discussions and disagreements about sporting events sometimes took place in their clusters. Another group of third graders also spoke of sporting events as a topic of conversation, as well as playing in clusters. A fifth-grade boys' group discussed fighting and noted that children could cluster around those in the battle thus blocking intervention from teachers.

Although fighting was commonly mentioned as an event in clusters by most of the children, they also mentioned a variety of other activities as taking place in that social formation. More positive interactive behaviors are noted in the discussions of what occurs in clusters and phalanxes, in contrast with the more negative accounts of lines and hallways in general in response to this same question. Most children like clusters and phalanxes. A listing of the activities stated by children is provided in Figure Fifteen.

	<b>All Girls Group</b>		<b>All Boys Group</b>		<b>Mixed Sex and Race Group</b>
	WHITE	BLEND	WHITE	BLEND	
<b>Third Grade</b>	fighting helping cheering up understanding talking getting answers holding hands		fighting talking	fighting fussing talking about sports teachers get ticked and paddle or punish	arguing fighting talking about people talking about sports playing with friends
<b>Fourth Grade</b>	group one: talking about weekend, teachers, people you hate get mad, sad, happy  group three: fighting kicking punching/hitting eating cussing hair pulling jerking things climbing			[no response]	talking laughing trading things
<b>Fifth Grade</b>	secrets talking giving answers to homework helping with homework	talk about someone pushing fighting cussing laughing	fighting telling secrets trading knives and guns trading food	fighting talking about others	

Figure 15. Activities in Clusters According to Children



### Teacher Presence

I again asked the children if teachers being around made a difference in clusters. Many children emphasized that clusters would either break up or be broken up when teachers appeared. Several fourth graders commented that people in clusters would stop talking when a teacher came into view or perhaps they would stop cursing when a teacher was nearby. One fourth grader thought they might get by with standing in a circle if they avoided talking. A member of another fourth-grade group said that talking would decrease to whispers when a teacher was nearby. Teachers of other grades do not interfere with clusters because they do not understand the rules, thought one fifth-grade girl. Another fifth-grade girl suspected that kids would get in trouble for being in a cluster, unless it occurred during the last half hour before school was dismissed. She also believed that some girls' clusters would be ignored by the teacher at practically any time of the day.

### Teacher Views of Clusters

Teachers seemed more receptive to clusters than phalanxes. Perhaps this was because I asked them about clusters after we had discussed phalanxes, and they had taken the opportunity to express more negative feelings. This being a second question about a social formation may have cued them to my interest in groupings in the hallway, and thus they may have made more positive comments because of my perceived interest. Or they may have believed clusters do not interfere with hallway activities as much as phalanxes. The lower frequency of clusters than phalanxes may have made them less threatening.

The most negative teacher thought that clusters before and after school hours would be acceptable, although she wondered if Mr. Martin, the principal, might believe otherwise. There was no time for clusters, because break lasted only five minutes, this teacher commented. However, five minutes was plenty of time for any of the clusters I observed, and there was time to spare for a pause at the drinking fountain and even a restroom break as well. This teacher also emphasized the disruption to classes of children talking in clusters.

A second teacher thought that clusters were more acceptable in the afternoon, although if they moved about in the hallway, problems could ensue. For example she thought moving clusters could signify an oncoming battle between cliques; they would be "drawing camp," to use her words.

A third teacher responded to my question about clusters by emphasizing the need for socializing among children. However, she noted that clusters can also be used for intimidating others, particularly newcomers to the school. The other third-grade teacher, whom children described as permissive, said that clusters were not a problem at her grade level. They usually let other children join their cluster groups, she said, although a few were beginning to form exclusive cliques.

### Summation

I agree with the third-grade teacher who emphasized the need for socializing among children. Clusters, probably to a greater extent than phalanxes, allow children to interact socially with one another apart from imposed groupings by teachers. They, like phalanxes, are an expression of peer culture, both in more negative respects like fighting and exclusion and in positive aspects like socializing.

### The Common Ground: Social Interaction

Although the distinctions between phalanxes and clusters are numerous, the commonalities are at least as salient if not more so. Clusters and phalanxes are marked by autonomous peer interaction, rather than *imposed* interaction, of various sorts, and thus can be considered an expression of peer culture. However, school clusters and phalanxes that include adults and children are not an expression of peer culture, first because they include nonpeers, and second because these are almost never autonomously initiated by students. They were also rare at Pellegrini elementary and were excluded from all analyses. In the present study the peer culture of children in the school is the focus, but when clusters and phalanxes occur among adults they may well express the adult peer culture of those involved. However, there may be exceptions to this rule, such as a boss introducing a worker to other people, although this is more likely to be an *imposed* social formation. This overlooked area needs research.



### **Buddy Talking**

When I interviewed children, I asked them for a distinctive term for the phalanx. Many did not offer suggestions and thus acquiesced to my terms, as noted earlier; I called phalanxes "rows" and clusters "groups" during interviews, with one exception to be noted shortly. Nearly all of the designations suggested by children implied social interaction between friends: "friends," "partners," "gang or team," "buddies," "a club." One particularly apt designation for the phalanx was suggested by a fourth-grade girl, "buddy talking," which was adopted by the other girls in the group from that point onward so I also used that term with her group. I was especially impressed and surprised during the subsequent session when I showed a videotape of clusters and immediately the girls identified the clusters as buddy talking. Even though phalanxes and clusters have a very different external appearance, these girls and many other children interviewed saw them as having the same basic function: social interaction.

I also noted previously that a number of groups of children move from being a phalanx to a cluster or vice versa and designated these "alternating groups." This contiguity suggests commonality of function; they are both for the purpose of social interaction. Both are part of peer culture.

### **Previous Research Related to Hallway Social Interaction**

The social interaction that takes place in phalanxes and clusters, as a part of peer culture, is assumed to be like that of other social interaction among children. Deegan (1993) notes the importance of children, rather than adults, openly and freely initiating encounters with others as the basis for developing consonant relationships. Although Deegan emphasizes the playground as important in this respect, the hallway likewise has potential for this function, as can be seen in the autonomous initiation of phalanxes and clusters. Douglass (1982) emphasizes that cross-cultural relationships may be fostered in hallways because of the informality of that context. Because of the potential for positive interaction in hallways, some researchers nearly seventy years ago recommended greater freedom in the hallway and other transitional settings in schools (Wellman, 1926).

Social interactions are unlikely to involve children from other grades or even another class at the same grade level (Goetz, 1975, p. 103). Two exceptions to this trend were that during recess and in the hallway children might come into contact with those from other classrooms. Lack of contact with children in other grades may be related to age hierarchies (Passuth, 1987) that are influenced by age-segregated architectural design (Johnson, 1982) as well as manipulation of the social environment. The latter include separate recess periods (Sutton-Smith, 1990) and different lunch periods or separate seating at lunch by grade level (Miracle, Rowan, & Suggs, 1984).

Thorne (1993, pp. 91-95) describes how boys tend to group themselves into "flocks," "buddies," or "gangs" that are larger than the more intimate friendship groups of girls. Boys' groups are more competitive and marked by hierarchy negotiated through threats, challenges, and insults. Boys turn virtually any activity into a contest, such as the running phalanxes noted previously, Thorne notes, and much of their talk involves a preoccupation with organized sports. Boys are more likely to break rules, which serves to bond them to one another as does aggression against boys and girls considered to be weaker. Boys touch one another through teasing, rough-and-tumble play, and "giving five." The function of teasing and violence as they relate to friendships is considered by Davies (1982, pp. 93-100).

Thorne says that girls' groups tend to emphasize "best friend" pairs that shift regularly to triads and multiple pairs, constituting complex networks and alliances that develop through the verbal involvement of the third member of triads, and I suspect this happened in the phalanxes and clusters I observed. These triads are exclusive and revert to diads (Eder & Hallinan, 1978). Such shifts in making and breaking friendships and the importance of "contingency friends" are described in detail by Davies (1982, pp. 68-75). Secrets are shared in girls' groups and "synchronized body rituals" are common such as dance steps, counting while jumping rope, and cheerleading, in contrast with boys' preoccupation with competition and organized sports. Thorne says that girls interact with one another in a more relaxed manner than boys, such as touching one another's hair, wearing each other's clothing, and commenting on one another's appearance. Although girls often emphasize the importance of being nice, below the surface is considerable conflict and tension. The agony of preadolescent girls produced by the conflict between the social expectation of being nice and the

desire for autonomy and self-assertion within the context of friendships is thoroughly documented by Brown and Gilligan (1992).

### **Prosocial Interaction in the Hall**

Positive social interaction can be found in some hallway transitions, either in communication interchanges or helping behavior, such as helping a peer get on a jacket, sweater, or boots. Although I casually observed the latter activities during kindergarten transitions at another school, these were rare events at Pellegrini elementary. In an observation note I emphasized that this was contrary to what I expected to find. However, the comparative lack of prosocial helping behavior observed may be due to children's apparel being stored in the classroom at Pellegrini elementary, not the hallway; thus I had less opportunity to observe such assistance. In addition, the prosocial helping observed at the other school was primarily at the kindergarten level, not the upper grades that I studied at Pellegrini elementary. However, I did see peers regularly assisting a physically handicapped child in the third grade.

Prosocial interaction has rarely been described in the literature on hallways. Goetz (1981) notes that appeals for help were rarely turned down in the first grades she studied, and proximity rather than friendship or gender was the basis for requesting and giving help. One research study (Honig, 1988) found that lectures, rewards like stars for helpful or kind acts, and describing those actions to other children increased prosocial interaction among second graders in hallways as well as in the classroom and cafeteria.

Lanese (1981) found that *teachers* were unanimously expected to provide prosocial assistance to students in the hallways of the school. However, this study did not address prosocial behavior of children in hallways, nor did it consider the possibility of teachers influencing students toward prosocial behavior through imitation of their hallway activities. These might be topics to study in future research.

### **Some Advantages of Hallway Social Activity**

Pellegrini and Davis (1993) document the academic value of a clear-cut break from normal classroom behavior marked by social interaction. Although they studied social interaction on the playground, I assume that the same findings apply to unstructured hallway interactions among children. Nine-year-old children who engaged in social sedentary play at recess, more frequent among girls, were more likely to pay attention and fidget less in class after recess than children who engaged in either highly physical activity or nonsocial sedentary play. Thus social sedentary play at recess appears to enhance the effectiveness of education, as social skills are being practiced and perhaps even learned on the playground. Pellegrini and Smith (in press) cite a forthcoming study by Pellegrini that kindergartners' social activity correlates with their level of achievement one year later, even when cognitive achievement in kindergarten is held constant. The conflict and resolution aspects of social interaction may have important influences on a child's classroom performance (Pellegrini & Smith, in press). Even the social interaction of rough-and-tumble play is related to problem solving (Pellegrini, 1990). Yet the importance of children in the hallway being allowed to initiate social contacts *freely*, mentioned earlier by Deegan, must be underscored. One study indicates that teacher supervision of hallway and lunchroom behavior is inversely related to reading achievement among first graders (Mason, 1986). These studies suggest the probability that social interaction in the hallway within phalanxes and clusters is likely to have an academically facilitative effect.

Other long-term effects may result by allowing social interaction in the hallway. Thompson (1989, p. 69) comments that peer influences in activities and conflict situations on the playground may significantly prepare children for life. Such social interaction may be preparatory for adult roles (Sluckin, 1981). Perhaps the same can be said for social interaction in the hallway.

### **Teachers and Children's Relationships**

By limiting and even forbidding phalanxes and clusters, teachers are undermining the potential for children developing prosocial and other positive interactive behavior. Children need good peer relationships. If for no other reason, this is why peer culture is important for teachers to understand and, to some extent and in constructive ways, support its expression in schools. Consider the following comments, made at the close of the interview session on phalanxes by fifth-

grade boys:

[DR]: What's the most important thing you've told me today?

[Randy]: Having good friendships.

[DR]: Why is that important?

[Randy]: To have somebody to talk to.

[Jim]: A guy's gotta lose friends a cause of the teachers.

[Randy]: Havin' somebody to stand up for you, if you ever had to.

[DR]: You lose friends because of the teacher. Why is that?

[Jim]: Just make us break up. 'Cause one person be bad and we'll be right in the middle of it and they make us break up.

[Randy]: If they don't let nobody talk to 'em, can't be their friend.

### **Conclusion**

Clusters and phalanxes are autonomously initiated groupings of children in hallway. They are important to children, although they are also the source of problems for both teachers and youngsters. Yet social interaction is basic to human nature, whether that interaction produces pain or pleasure. As the third-grade boy, cited previously, commented, "We need friends, ya can't live without them."

## CHAPTER X QUASI-GROUP FORMATIONS

Throughout my research on hallways, I was confronted with several kinds of activities that seemed to me to depart from the basic unit of study, groups in the hallway. These might be considered "quasi-groups" because interaction was either diffuse or brief.

Three varieties of quasi-group behavior can be identified. First, the *hallway crowd* is a diffuse gathering of people who may interact with one another within that grouping, but whole-group interaction is minimal. Second, *cruising* is very brief, self-initiated contacts in the hallway not sufficiently sustained or reciprocal to be considered either phalanx or cluster. Cruising can be positive, negative, or neutral. The term cruising fits within a metaphorical system that compares hallways with highways. Many brief activities can be conceptualized through an alternative metaphor; they are *rituals* or rites of passage.

Observation and analysis of hallway crowds, cruising, and ritual behavior are marginal in this study, but emerged within it and are considered peripheral to its main concern, social formations. McCall (1969) describes such constructs as discovered after data collection has concluded, although this was not the case here. I saw them, but did not give them sustained attention during the study. Thus my conclusions about these quasi-group patterns are more speculative and tentative than those made in preceding chapters. My thoughts about these quasi-groups are more like the possibilities that characterize the initial stages of research (Becker, 1969). Thus conclusions here may need considerable revision when informed by additional data.

### Hallway Crowds

I was more than a month into this study before I realized that there was a distinctive grouping of children other than the line, phalanx, and cluster. I am not sure why it took so long to identify. I had studied and taught about crowds in an college level introductory sociology course I have taught for more than a decade. Perhaps I did not see them for so long because I did not expect to observe this grouping in a school hallway, or perhaps it was because the crowds in this hallway were not like most crowds. The elementary school hallway crowds did not fit the general sociological typology of crowds.



The standard distinction among various kinds of crowds was originally summarized by Blumer (1969a). Of the four varieties named by Blumer, the hallway crowds I observed came closest to the "casual crowd," marked by participants' concentrating on a specific event but with a lack of interaction within the group. However, the hallway crowds I saw fell short of this loosest form of the crowd described by Blumer in that there was no specific event taking everyone's attention. Indeed the only function of the *hallway crowd* as an entity was waiting to enter a classroom. However, within the hallway crowd, stationary phalanxes and clusters were observed functioning separately from the crowd as a whole. These crowds occurred frequently in the hallway studied, partly because of the overcrowded conditions of the school and partly because sixth-grade teachers were less insistent about their children staying in lines. Crowds were a regular phenomenon at the sixth- grade end of the hallway, but also occurred from time to time when classes changed at the fourth- and fifth-grade levels.

Crowds were a regular marker of major transitions when several classrooms emptied into the hallway simultaneously, although crowds were not an inevitable result of major transitions. At times multiple lines replaced the crowd. However, these multiple lines sometimes took almost as much space as the crowd.

### **Distinctions Between Hallway Crowds and Groups**

During the fourth interview with children, I asked the youngsters if they could distinguish crowds and the other groupings of people in the hallway. The main distinctions they emphasized were the increased number of people involved in a crowd and the large amount of space taken. "A crowd is a thousand people, a group is maybe nine," one third grader exaggerated, who also noted how difficult it was to move through the hallway when it was filled with a crowd. More realistically, perhaps underexaggerating, a fifth grader commented that any group larger than five people was a crowd.

Several fourth graders also emphasized differences in social activities by crowds and clusters. "You be together" in a cluster, one girl commented. Another in her group emphasized how people "get touched all the time, shoved, even hit" when in a crowd. "You're smooshed up, squished" in a crowd, commented one third grader. "I can't even breathe, it's so crowded," said a fourth-grade girl. This was interesting considering that spacing in these hallway crowds appeared to be about the same as in lines, clusters, and phalanxes. Perhaps they seemed more crowded because

children are usually not voluntary members of crowds, because crowds force them to be next to people not necessarily desired, and because most children in a hallway crowd are surrounded on all sides by other people.

One fourth grader emphasized that groups smaller than hallway crowds are more active; I think she may have been contrasting them with the passive waiting of the crowd. Third- and fifth-grade boys commented that hallway crowds were usually noisier than phalanxes and clusters. But that did not mean conversation was easily accomplished. A fifth-grade girl told me, "You can't hardly talk, so many are talking at once." One of her peers added, "You don't have friends in a crowd; you can't tell secrets." One third-grade boy commented on the sameness of people in the hallway crowd, "They're all the same: same people, same talk, same people, all loud. It's like a baseball stadium."

"I get a headache when I'm in a crowd," complained one fifth-grade boy. But another member of his group responded, "But it's cool if your friends are all around you." A fourth grader at first said that he would like to be in a crowd to hide from the teacher, but on further thought changed his mind. "You get knocked over in a crowd. . . . Push one person and all go down." But if children are with friends in the crowd, they might be able to talk, he concluded. Several fourth-grade girls noted that fights often begin in crowds, as do random hitting and pulling of hair. Yet they also noted being able to talk and eat in a hallway crowd as well. "What's it like to be in a crowd?" I asked them. "Happy, but not always" was their conclusion. A third-grade girl thought it could be fun in a crowd, " . . . but you get squished too." Perhaps the latter was tolerable if you were next to friends, she decided.

I concluded the third interview of fourth-grade girls by asking

[DR]: What's the most important thing you've said today?

[Julie]: Suffocating.

[DR]: Suffocating. Why do you say that?

[Julie]: Because people always bein' around us. You can't breathe because they're always around you.

[DR]: There's too many people in the hall?

[Julie]: Yeah, there's too many people.

### Summation

Crowds were a regular aspect of life at Pellegrini elementary, to some extent because of overcrowding. Children often dislike hallway crowds, although they do not appear to arouse the same antipathy as lines, perhaps because of the possibility of forming clusters and stationary phalanxes within a crowd. Yet those social formations do not function well in crowds because other bodies are as close as those included in the stationary phalanx or cluster; social formations are most clearly operational when they include some but not everyone who happens to be nearby.

### Cruising

One metaphor that regularly fit the school hallway better than any other is the hallway as highway. Children walked or ran back and forth usually on the right side of the hall, just as automobiles do on a road. There are intersections at the doorways to classrooms as well as outside doorways. There is a rest stop available in the form of drinking fountains and restrooms. I observed a child rushing through the hallway with a large manila envelope one day, a special delivery service of sorts. An animal shelter truck, consisting of the assistant principal, arrived to escort a wayward dog out of the hall. The ambulance rushed through several times: a child running to the restroom with a nosebleed. Teachers' inspecting lines in the hall were like troopers pulling over a suspicious car for a thorough check. "Get up against the wall," a teacher told the line on one such occasion, not unlike a police officer doing a body search; I wondered if the children felt violated as I think I would if a police officer gave me a body search. Teachers were also like traffic cops when directing traffic at intersections, children coming and going from their entryways. The cafeteria was like a fast food restaurant; I recall children complaining about the poor quality of food and lack of selection much like some parents complain about McDonalds while on vacation. My own role was like a traffic helicopter buzzing around, getting an overall view of what was going on, a distanced and distinctive view from the participants despite trying to incorporate their perspectives. I was even physically higher than many of the kids. Crowds are traffic jams, major transitions are rush

hours, and enrollment or permission constitute the driver's license. During member checks, teachers agreed with the metaphor, adding that the driver's license gets taken away for speeding, collisions occur, and drivers must learn the rules of the road. Children during member checks also agreed, suggesting that sixth graders were semitrucks, hallways were long like highways, and--as is the custom in rural Georgia--people often stop their cars in the middle of the road to chat. The highway metaphor is powerful.

Within the framework of this metaphor, early in the study I developed the designation *cruising* to describe children ambling down the hallway, looking for something to occupy their time. Sometimes youngsters would wander from one side of the hallway to the other in search of something to see. Kids would gaze at the few pieces of artwork on the walls, stare through classroom windows, see what graffiti they could find on, or contribute to, entryway posts or the metal strip, or anything else that would help pass the time. Sometimes children would hit signs, slap the top of a doorway, tap entryway posts, and engage in other activities to relieve boredom.

At first I emphasized cruising as a solitary activity, occurring when the hall was empty or nearly so. But later I came to realize that cruising also occurred when a number of children were in the hall. Indeed, this *social* cruising was much more interesting than the solitary cruising I had noticed earlier. The social cruising involved brief interchanges between children, usually as they moved down the hallway. Social cruising, like the solitary variety, often indicated boredom or surplus time. The social interaction was not intensive enough to become a phalanx or cluster--phalanxes lasting less than five seconds were not significantly different from other varieties of cruising to be distinguished for this analysis.

Two kinds of social cruising emerged within this research. These included accidental touching between children and objects, not always accidental and not always genuine contact, and teasing or name calling.

### **Accidental Touches**

As children came near one another in the hallway, they often touched one another as they passed each other going opposite directions or when one child overtook another going the same direction. Most commonly this was a rubbing of shoulders or less frequently a gentle punch. Sometimes children only have near collisions, but pull away as if actually touched. When they were going the same direction, this reminded me of one car passing another on a highway and coming too close, resulting in a minor or near collision. Conversely, when they bumped passing in opposite directions, it reminded me of the highway game in which some adolescent drivers participate where two cars meet in the middle of the road at a fast speed to determine who will "be chicken" and move out of the way. Fortunately the result in the school hallway is that if neither yields, each receives a bump on the shoulder, not the damage from an automobile accident. Is elementary children passing in the hallway the precursor to similar behavior in cars when they become adolescents?

While in the field I wondered what such passing touches might mean. My first thought was that they were a form of dominance, but the fact that touches were often ignored made me think otherwise. Assertion of dominance is likely either to precipitate a fight or at least a protest or to acknowledge submission perhaps by moving out of the way. Very often neither of these reactions took place; the bumping was simply ignored. This touching accompanied by no reaction might be designated *touch and go*.

Perhaps children ignored touch and go because they thought bumping inevitable in a crowd. Although the hallway was crowded at times and this resulted in accidental bumping, very often such touching occurred when the hallway was relatively empty and plenty of space was available so bumping could be avoided. What is the explanation for touch and go? I do not know, and unfortunately I failed to bring up the subject with children. Their comments on other subjects that mentioned bumping usually reflected the crowdedness of the hallway or dominance of some children, and these ideas do account for some of the bumping. Examining the reactions of children, some indication of various purposes of touch and go can be suggested. When children perceived such bumping and touching as rough-and-tumble play, friendly jostling ensued if time allowed. The touch and go was a relational overture. When such bumping or touching was considered an expression of dominance, angry facial expressions and more aggressive reactions resulted. The touch and go was an assertion of dominance. But the lack of any detectable facial expression or body language by either person in the touch and go encounter makes me wonder if these are a denial

of the personhood of the other individual; the behavior is ignored because the other person is treated as if she or he does not exist. Were they being socialized to live in the impersonal world of a bureaucracy? One interesting aspect of such encounters is that they did not involve the ritual contamination that children use to separate themselves from the opposite sex; they did not produce displays of cross-sex contamination, such as brushing off the "cooties" supposedly acquired by contacts. Was the denial of personhood so great that even negative connotations were not warranted? The meaning to children of touch and go might be explored in further research of children in hallways.

### Teasing and Name Calling

When the punching and rubbing described in the preceding section are not touch and go, then they might be considered a form of teasing. Such teasing as well as calling other children names are infused within cruising because they are activities that often occur as children move down the hallway. Some of the same behaviors can also be considered rituals of resistance, to be considered later in this chapter.

As children cruised down the hallway, they often teased one another by name calling. Children also spoke of this several times during interviews. They were dismayed and hurt by such teasing. I am puzzled by this kind of verbal aggression because some of the same children that teased others also talked about the personal hurt they experienced from teasing. Yet meanings of insults to children vary over time and context, as they can indicate dislike, personal status, or even friendship (Fine & Sandstrom, 1988, p. 35). I am amazed that so much creativity is given to activities such as twisting a peer's name into unpleasant contortions. I recall being the victim of such teasing as a child and even wished that I had a different last name to avoid this kind of hurt, but I also suspect I did some of this kind of teasing to others as well. Name twisting is particularly hurtful because it takes what is most personal and unique to the individual, the name, and makes it offensive; it is not a generic put down like "sissy" or "stupid." I also recall long ago a parent who was dismayed that no matter what first name was given a child, peers would succeed in distorting it into something horrible.

Children also put down one another through what they called "cut downs." A fifth-grade boy, who described himself as "king of cut downs," gave some examples:

You're mother's so fat that she fills both sides of the family. . . . Momma and Daddy so fat when they hold hands they say we are the world.

This boy also ridiculed one of his teachers, calling her a "midget" because of her height although she was still taller than he was. Yet in a later session these boys complained about girls picking on them.

[Tom]: They aggravate you.

[Jim]: Well, depends upon what mood they're in. Sometimes with a girl you smack 'em on the back of the head ... pick on em. . . .

[Dave]: [A girl] put a bird on my leg one day.

[Jim]: Kick you. She always kick you.

[DR]: So girls sometimes pick on you.

[Tom]: No, we pick on them then they pick on us.

[Dave]: Yeah, we do cut downs, that's what we do.

[Jim]: Momma said ya can't hit no girls.

One behavior that I observed surprised me because it failed to produce teasing by other children. Several sixth-grade girls on numerous occasions carried teddy bears, complete with diapers and safety pins, in the hallway. This met matter-of-fact acceptance by both male and female peers. On some occasions one of these teddy bears was the center of attention by several sixth-grade girls. I asked one of the sixth-grade teachers about this and he explained that the bears were purchased by children as a part of a drug awareness program, but he admitted he was puzzled by the high interest in teddy bears as well.

There are also varieties of teasing indigenous to some African American males. Physical aggression or "meddlin" was mentioned previously (Hanna, 1982). "Playing the dozens" and other forms of insult between peers are common to the socialization of African American youths (Hale-



Benson, 1982, p. 66; Heath, 1982, p. 113). I do not recall observing this at Pellegrini elementary; the self-proclaimed "king of cut-downs" was a white boy...

Why do children tease one another? Davies (1982, pp. 93-100) suggests that teasing results from the fear of superiority in others as well as the attempt to be in a superior position to others. Friends rarely tease one another, she commented, although the African American teasing is an exception to this rule. I asked teachers about this, and they suggested motives of domination and "just being mean." Children provided the same answers. I sensed that teasing was a contest between children, with the winner being the one who created the most humiliating put-down or name distortion. It may also be a form of dominance. But why insult one another when the likely consequence is to receive insults? I am still puzzled by this.

### Summation

The highway metaphor fits the school hallway well. The quasi-group formation termed cruising is a common pattern of activity in the hallway, even though it falls short of being a group formation because of its brevity. Children like to cruise, and to some extent it can be considered a part of peer culture.

### Ritualistic Behavior

Another way of looking at children's hallway behavior is through the lens of ritual and rite. There is an element of ritual in hallway activities of children. Ritual involves ceremony or routinized actions and is not exclusively a human phenomenon, as even animals have greeting rituals that confirm the identities of mate and children (Erikson, 1977, pp. 78-83). Grand rituals, says Erik Erikson, are major changes such as rites of passage, while everyday rituals prescribe the proper way of performing activities, such as eating with a spoon or greeting others. He concludes that rituals may have one or more purposes, including (a) the satisfaction of needs, (b) production of a sense of manifest destiny, (c) causing the individual to feel others are less worthy than self, (d) sharing of a community vision, (e) higher levels of understanding, (f) differentiation between acceptable and unacceptable behavior, and (g) development of identity. Ritual is routine and formal behavior, though not necessarily fixed and unchangeable (Rosaldo, 1989, p. 12).

Hallway rituals are everyday regularities, not grand rituals. In *The Rites of Passage*, van Gennep (1960, pp. 15-24) describes rites of "territorial passage," consisting of formalities when an individual passes from one geographical location to another. A passport, visa, and customs clearance are required to cross most national borders, the modern forms of sometimes elaborate rituals required in the past. Rites mark the territorial borders of those living in a given area, boundaries often indicated throughout history by a physical objects such as a gate, post, or mound of rocks. Sometimes a neutral zone, such as a forest or marsh, marked the boundaries of countries or other socially defined area. This neutral zone is a place of "waving between two worlds," says van Gennep, requiring a special letter and perhaps ceremonies. Smaller geographical areas, such as villages and individual houses, have smaller transition markers such as the somewhat more elaborate main entry to a house. People perform simple rituals for entry such as knocking on a door or ringing a doorbell, followed by either an invitation to enter or refusal of access. Orthodox Jews often touch the mezuzah, a physical container of sacred writings, posted on the doorway as they enter or leave a home.

Van Gennep's ideas of territorial passage fit Pellegrini elementary to some extent. The hallway may be considered a "place of waving between two worlds," the world of school culture, the classroom, and the world of peer culture, the playground or other areas outside the school. Sometimes the school culture world predominated in the hall, in the form of teacher authority and school lines. At other times peer culture predominated, with phalanxes and clusters. Sometimes both occurred simultaneously. This was indeed a place of *waving* between two worlds. Participation in the social formations may be considered rituals of entry into one culture or the other. Beresin (1993, pp. 12-13) links ritual and crossing boundaries with framing, marking the beginning of a second scene and end of the first.

Boundaries of classrooms were marked with hanging signs next to the entryway providing the teacher's name, denoting the classroom as the territory of the teacher, and the grade level, denoting which students could be provided access. On the window dividing the doors to the central section of the school was a sign that gave the earliest time parents could pick up their children,

displaying symbolic access restrictions like the visa requirements for traveling across the borders of many countries.

Although a written hall pass is not required at Pellegrini elementary, as it is in some schools, teachers and administrators were able to identify adults and children who did not belong in the hallway at given times of the day. A ritual degradation ceremony might occur when a child was in the hallway at an inappropriate time, such as public scolding by an adult or being escorted to the classroom or time out room. The territorial boundary for the classroom was the entryway, marked by the metal posts in the middle of the entryway. Countless times I saw children touch, rub, bang, climb, and play around these posts. I often thought of those touches as ritualistic, though one could also make the case that they reflected boredom. In contrast, British children use rituals to give an oath, exit a game, or admit to or deny belching or flatulence during recess (Sluckin, 1981, pp. 31-34).

Entry to a classroom often required lining; when this was not required, some other cue to accessible entry was used, such as noting that the last child from the previous class had left or receiving a signal from the teacher. Adults customarily knocked on doors before entering a teacher's classroom. Likewise leaving a classroom required a ceremony. Often children lined up inside the classroom, then on a cue from the teacher departed from the room. Sometimes only the cue was required. Almost always teachers required children to be quiet before leaving, insisting on the solemnity that elsewhere accompanies religious ritual and prayer. Similarly LeCompte (1975, pp. 93, 171) describes rituals that signal children to line up, get ready, or change to a new activity.

Outside doors required a ritual of sorts for entry and exit. Both of these double doors had a frame with a central divider made of steel and a large glass window, so that children could not physically pass side by side. A phalanx was required to disperse, at least momentarily, to move through these doorways. The school architecture was such that the school culture social formation, the line, moved easily through these doorways, but peer culture social formations, phalanxes and clusters, could not. Thus children had to conform to school culture momentarily to physically move from the outside world to the hallway or vice versa. As children moved through these outside doors, they often performed their own rituals of access, boys by jumping and touching the top of the doorway, and both boys and girls momentarily ceasing conversation as they passed single file.

Ritual contamination and taboo space were revealed in one area of the hallway studied. The Chapter One rooms were described as "an area of degradation" in my field notes. I have mentioned previously the boy who was released from class for Chapter One activities who regularly crawled on the floor to avoid the view of the camera so he would not be observed entering the area. Occasionally other children would move away from the Chapter One entryway. This suggests that this entryway was considered taboo space for some children, an area to be avoided because of ritual contamination.

Although everyday rituals were commonly observed in the hallways of Pellegrini elementary, there were also indications of Erikson's grand rituals. Van Gennep (1960, pp. 178-192) describes rites that mark the passage of the year, season, and lunar month in many societies of the world. The end of the year baseball tournament between Pellegrini elementary classrooms functioned as a marker of the passing school year as well as promotion to the next grade level for nearly all children. There were also special assemblies in the cafeteria that helped mark the end of the school year. Some schools have more formal ceremonies to denote such a change, such as the sixth-grade graduation described by Goetz (1975, pp. 94-95). These mark the cyclical nature of life, which van Gennep believes represents the death of the old and rebirth of the new. The cosmic rhythm of existence is played out in miniature within the school calendar.

Other writers have also noted the rituals that occur in schools. Jackson (1990, pp. 6-8) draws parallels between the rituals of school and church, noting that both are very stable environments in which repetitive, ritualistic behavior occurs. Ritualistic activities in the school he observed included strict scheduling of subjects and activities and demanding rules in the classroom, such as raising the hand to speak and children keeping their eyes on their own test papers. Frederick Erickson (1982) also describes classroom rituals, comparing the sequences and other aspects of school lessons to a Roman Catholic mass. Similarly Merritt (1982, pp. 227-228) describes the ritual closure or resolution of classroom discussions, as well as deference to the powerful Other--teachers and administrators--in school. Gracey (1993) uses a military metaphor to portray how kindergartners are shaped into students through a "very rigid and tightly controlled set of rituals and

routines." Their day was punctuated by "ritual oaths and songs" such as the pledge of allegiance and singing "America."

### **Rituals of Resistance: Fooling Around**

McLaren (1993, pp. 145-179) develops the idea that children use rituals of their own to counteract the prescribed teaching rituals of teachers. Although the participants in his study were eighth graders and he primarily emphasizes *classroom* rituals of resistance, many of the activities he describes also occurred in the older elementary hallway of Pellegrini elementary. The idea of students resisting teacher-prescribed patterns is best exemplified by the behavior in the line social formations. As is noted in Chapter Eight, line rules prescribe solemn, compliant acquiescence to the rite of waiting, followed by slow, quiet walking. It does approximate a rite, and at one point in my field notes I considered the uniform sameness of the line as "the liturgy of the line." But within the line student resistance can be considerable. Again, consider all of the behavior children listed that can happen in lines: much of it contradicts and resists the line rules.

In an even broader sense, any of the misbehavior of children in the hallway can be understood as rituals of resistance as children are resisting the prescribed rules of teachers and administrators. This "fooling around," as described by children, includes talking, throwing things, bugging people, running, or fighting (Lancy, 1993, pp. 62, 64; Oswald, Krappmann, Chowdhuri, & von Salisch, 1987). As noted previously, children view fooling around as normal exuberance, although teachers may see it as symptomatic of an underlying problem (Lancy, 1993, pp. 62, 64). This variety of behavior can occur either within social formations or apart from them; thus in the latter case it is a variety of cruising, but both within and apart from social formations it is ritualistic. Extended bouts of fooling around may become rough-and-tumble play as described numerous times in previous chapters or conversely actual aggression between children.

Several studies of fooling around during transitions in *middle* schools also reflect the kinds of misbehavior likely during transitions in elementary schools. Staub (1987, p. 38) indicates that misbehavior is especially likely to occur in hallways, and he confirms Goetz's (1975, p. 176) opinion that this is because of little supervision. The most common problems Staub found were high levels of noise, verbal aggression often including foul language, and playful nonverbal activities such as punching, pushing, and sparring that escalate with time (pp. 43, 49). The crowding of youngsters in the hallway may increase the problem (p. 44).

A second study of youngsters in middle school (Williams, 1987) revealed that misbehavior was more likely to occur in the cafeteria (56% of problems) and somewhat less likely in hallways (25%) and bathrooms (19%). Types of problems included fighting and pushing (31% of incidents), running (27%), being in a forbidden area (14%), cutting in line (12%) and other problems (each less than 4%).

McLaren (1993, pp. 145-166) also describes numerous resistance rituals that are like these categories of fooling around. He speaks of the "stirring frenzy of a class 'going wild': clowning around, talking against teachers, slapstick, obscenities, jostling and hitting one another, scowls at the teacher, kicking one another, shouting, belching and flatulating, joking and laughing, sarcasm, pranks, parody, throwing objects, making faces, and a specific "laughter of resistance." This reminded me of Sutton-Smith's (1990) typifying recess as a festival. Again, most of these eighth grade activities that researchers subsume under fooling around also occurred in the hallway of Pellegrini elementary. The resistance is an attempt to incorporate the "streetcorner state" into the school building, McLaren concludes. In the terminology of school and peer cultures, fooling around is the infusing of peer culture into school culture.

### **Interaction Rituals**

Greeting and parting rituals are described in detail by Goffman (1971, pp. 62-94). In the hallways of Pellegrini elementary these included verbal expressions such as "Hi" or "Hey" and "Bye" or "So long." "Giving five," a ritual hand slap routine was also common. As I observed several of these rituals, I thought of them as a hallway etiquette. These rituals initiated and concluded interaction groups, but were also observed in isolation from social formations. Interaction rituals constituted a quasi-group activity when they took place apart from lines, phalanxes, and clusters, as children met one another while passing in the hallway or as they noticed one another by glancing across the hallway. These interaction rituals mark a recognition of the

personhood of the other individual, in contrast with "touch and go," as well as note some degree of relationship likely to be expressed at other times.

### **Rituals of Love**

Desmond Morris (1971, pp. 72-79) has described in detail the idealized and somewhat dated courting rituals that denote attraction, love, and sexuality between humans. These interaction patterns were traditionally required to denote interest in an individual of the opposite sex and desire for greater intimacy. Were such rituals displayed at Pellegrini elementary? Although I did not focus on this during my observations or interviews, I suspect that some current equivalent of Morris's love rituals took place. At least some of the cross-sex teasing, touching, and rough-and-tumble play constituted rituals that may have reflected desire, conscious or unconscious, for association with the opposite sex. Perhaps these rituals are the peer-prescribed elementary-level equivalents to asking for a personal relationship across sex boundaries. Indeed, it is not unusual to observe similar teasing, touching, and play among older adolescents who are dating.

Were overt forms of affection other than teasing, touching, and rough-and-tumble play displayed at Pellegrini elementary? Various forms of affection were observed in phalanxes and clusters, as was noted in the previous chapter. Clearly affectionate kinds of behavior were most commonly observed among girls in the older elementary grades, although affection was more commonly expressed by both girls and boys in the early elementary grades. I noticed this more on the playground than in the hallway, as these younger children were almost invariably in lines while in the hall. I have also conjectured that rough-and-tumble play may be a masculinized form of affection allowing interpersonal touch without accusations of being gay.

Few researchers have examined affection as a part of social interaction among children, and I located only one who considered affection in hallways. Generally elementary boys and girls avoid expressing affection with the opposite sex (Oswald, Krappmann, Chowdhuri, & von Salisch, 1987). However, Best (1983, pp. 114-115) observed boys and girls in second to fifth grades kissing in hallways while on their way to and from class as well as in the library. Although children in my interview groups talked about kissing, I never observed this in the hallways of Pellegrini elementary.

### **Summation**

Rituals and rites are part of hallway behavior. These include rituals of resistance, interaction rituals, and love rituals. One formal context of rituals is the church, but the school is in some ways like a church. Johnson (1982) follows a religious analogy to the school, noting that boundary markers, such as outside signs, announcement boards, and spatial separation mark the school as sacred space, the school flagpole has replaced the cathedral spire as a symbolic rallying point for communities, and rites of entry are required for children and adults, much like the genuflections in a Catholic church. Icons of accomplishment, drawings and test papers, dotted the hallway. Community gatherings unrelated to school activities sometimes took place over weekends at Pellegrini elementary, much like similar community gatherings that occur at churches. McClaren (1993, p. 153) even describes the teacher role as that of a shaman or priest, while Herrera (1988, p. 16) describes the school as using "pastoral care" rather than active education. Teachers' roles were a bit pastoral or priestly at Pellegrini elementary; teachers expected children to listen reverently and obey their exhortations. During the study I pondered the metaphor of the state school system as the Vatican for the schools, with the county system and local school respectively being an archdiocese and local parish. Perhaps the school today has become a secular church encouraging the affirmation of, belief in, and devotion to society's values.

### **Conclusion**

Crowds on the one hand and cruising and ritual behavior on the other are two categories of hallway behavior that are in some ways opposite one another. Crowds are large while routine cruising and ritual activity are often solitary or, at most, involve a single classroom. Crowds are noisy, cruising and rituals usually are not. Crowds, cruising, and rituals are more than leftover categories from my analysis; they are distinctive ways that children act and interact in the hallway. More research on these quasi-groups is needed.

## CHAPTER XI

### A CONCLUSION BUT NOT THE END

It is essential to draw conclusions from research, but it is also important to avoid premature closure to research questions. In this final chapter the questions raised at the beginning of the research are addressed using the results of the study described in previous chapters. The theoretical import of the study is considered so that the results can be integrated with the existing literature. Expectations prior to the study are compared with results and changes while doing research to determine confirmatory, discrepant, and elusive findings. Strengths and weaknesses of this study are considered, as well as recommendations for schools in light of the outcomes of this research. This chapter concludes with suggestions for future research.

#### Three Questions Revisited

Prior to beginning this research three questions were raised that helped focus the direction and scope of the observations and interviews. Although previous chapters have addressed these in detail, additional summative and global analysis is possible. These are not *answers* to the questions, but *responses* that better inform the issues raised by the questions. No single study can provide definitive answers; rather, the results of multiple concurring studies provide trustworthy direction.

#### ***1. What formal whole-class movements occur in hallways?***

The school line is a very common social formation in the hallway. It is the only social formation observed in this study that includes the entire classroom of children. It is also a very formal variety of structure, as it is imposed and maintained by teachers. Youngsters are required to follow formal rules demanding quiet, slow adult-controlled movements or stationary waiting prior to change of location.

School lines, which are different from queues because of their distinctive function and hierarchical control by teachers, usually are not free of peer culture influences. Children participate in numerous activities that depart from school line rules and contradict the prescriptive norms for uniformity of child behavior. As much as children infuse the classroom with peer culture activities, as previously described, children also infuse peer culture in the school line. Children engage in numerous forms of social interaction, positive and negative, in the school line and sometimes depart from the line formation temporarily to form phalanxes and clusters. Compared with other social formations, quasi-group activities, and individual behavior in the hallway, the school line is the only context for formal movements of entire classrooms of children.

## ***2. What informal social activities take place in hallways?***

Hundreds of different activities take place in the hallway, as described in previous chapters. I saw dozens of activities and heard children describe dozens more. The variety of social activities, most of which are important components to peer culture, is overwhelming. Almost anything can and does occur in the hallway.

Although the hallway I observed was safe from most physical threats, there were numerous times when children were emotionally threatened, angered, or frustrated by teachers and peers. On the other hand, children also had positive interactions with friends and others in the hallway. The hallway is a snapshot of life in general, the context for joy and sorrow, peace and war, love and hatred, excitement and boredom.

Social activities were most obvious in the cluster social formation. Clusters lasted longer, although they were less frequent, and more concentrated attention was given to interaction. Social interaction also took place in phalanxes, although the movement of the phalanx diverted at least some of the attention from socializing to maintaining trajectory and adjacency through the hall, and arrival at the destination usually, and probably artificially, terminated interaction. As noted previously, social interaction also took place in lines, though this required a breach of teacher rules. Brief social interaction was observed in some varieties of quasi-group behavior. Informal social activity, in all its variety, is commonplace in the hallway, although generally discouraged by teachers.

## ***3. What do the various social formations and activities within them mean to children?***

Children attribute rich meanings to the three social formations identified, the line, phalanx, and cluster, as well as to quasi-group activities. Meanings are not uniform, but vary by age, ethnicity, and sex. Meanings also vary among each of these groupings. The influence of group membership as well as individual differences among children within each group is inferred by these variations of meaning.

Although the meanings are not uniform, children often confer some kind of meanings to activities and the social formations. Do they always confer meaning? Children live in the here and now; they are existential creatures and do not always reflect on life and infuse meanings to their experiences. Children are. Children act. They do not always have well-articulated reasons for their actions. But they also confer meanings, particularly in the context of interaction or as a consequence of interacting. One of the wonders of childhood is that kids can exist and thrive without the constant need to make sense of what they do. But an equally impressive wonder of childhood is that kids can and do confer meanings, and when they do so, the meanings can diverge from those of other children as well as adults.

### **Why Are These Results Important?**

In Chapter One the rationale for the study describes why this research is needed and important. Still to be addressed is the issue of where the findings of my study fit in the literature and why they belong in the literature. What are the significant contributions of this research?

The hallway literature is at once minimal and plentiful. Only two studies have given any extended attention to the hallway as a social context, and these are both studies of middle schools. A literature is needed because of the importance of all areas of the school building, not just the classroom, as emphasized in Chapter One. In a sense there is almost no literature, although it is needed. This is an overlooked area that can help concerned adults understand school life and children better. This study breaks new ground for studying elementary school hallways and opens the door to what may be numerous studies of hallways in different schools and different kinds of hallways within schools. A door has opened into the hallway.

Yet there is also a plentiful literature that relates to the hallway. Dozens of studies have been cited that relate cogently to what is observed in elementary school hallways. There is a continuity between the classroom child and the hallway child, the playground child and the hallway child, the child at home and the hallway child, and even the child in the experimental laboratory and the hallway child. As the door to the school hallway opens, it permits adults to see the children are still children. There is much to be viewed through the door that has been seen before. Yet the context is distinctive, a shifting context that is sometimes very controlling and at other times relatively uncontrolled, and thus multiple views of children are possible in one context.

How else is the hallway distinctive? It is the context for both the formal and the informal, both school culture and peer culture. Sometimes these cultures are very separate, as when silent, uniform lines snake their way from one room to another, or when children cluster for several minutes outside the sight of teachers and other adult authorities. When the cultures are separate, the hallway is much like the classroom or conversely like the playground. But more often than not, school culture and peer culture are not separate. Peer culture is superimposed on school culture as a boy playfully punches another boy at the end of the school line. School culture is infused in peer culture as girls play a lining up game or as girls in a phalanx stop talking when they see a teacher watching them.

Thus the hallway is a dialectic between the two cultures. Sometimes uniform school culture is imposed, sometimes peer culture is allowed free expression, but often the activities and social formations of the hallway are a synthesis of the two cultures. The most common social formation in the school, the phalanx, expresses components of both school and peer cultures, as the *specific destination* of movement is usually prescribed by school culture while the social activity simultaneous with movement reflects peer culture. The specific destination is underscored in the previous sentence because, although phalanxes exist in many nonschool situations, school culture generally prescribes the destination of the phalanx in the school. As noted previously, the school culture of the classroom can be infused with elements of peer culture, while the playground is peer culture occasionally infused with school culture by the teacher or monitor, but the hallway is distinctive in that all three aspects of the dialectic are present. With changes of time, place, and participants one of the three aspects may predominate, but school culture, peer culture, and various fusions of the two cultures are regularly observed in the elementary school hallway.

Why is my research on school hallways important? The physical context does not by itself make hallways important. The physical arrangement of children, social formations apart from children's activities within them, hardly seems worth the effort of research. Even the dialectic of cultures, considered as an impersonalized set of constructs, does not by itself make hallways worthy of study. School hallways are important because the children in them are important. Social formations are important because children act and interact within them. Culture, and the dialectic of cultures, are important ideas because the construct of culture is one way of understanding children. Cultural constructs, groupings, and physical contexts are secondary to the more fundamental quest behind the study of school hallways, understanding and appreciating the creatures all of us once were, children.

Where does this research fit in the existing literature? The cultural theoretical framework clearly corresponds with the school and peer culture literature, much of which has been cited throughout this study. The study fits by providing a new context for examining these two cultures, underscoring the fusions and combinations that often exist in the hallway and elsewhere.

The question of where social formations as physical proxemic entities fit in the literature is more ambiguous. I found very little research on children that makes use of Hall's theory, although Corsaro's findings can be related to that theory. There is a small literature on children's proxemics and nonverbal communication (e.g., Feldman, 1982; Hoffer & St. Clair, 1981) and an equally small literature on proxemic patterns of teachers and children within educational contexts (e.g., Erickson & Mohatt, 1982; Herrera, 1988; Neill, 1991). But these sources analyze physical interactions as spatial distances between and movements of individual children or between children and teachers, not social formations as group and quasi-group phenomena. Indeed, the three social formations I have identified are overlooked in the social science disciplines of sociology, interpersonal communications, and psychology. A literature in this area is needed, describing how children and adults develop, sustain, act within, and terminate social formations.

### **Expectations, Findings, and Reversals**

When I began this study, I had a number of expectations that reflected my past experiences in school hallways and what I read in the literature. Many of these expectations were confirmed by my observations, but others were negated. Sometimes intended research on a topic had to be aborted because of unforeseen difficulties or inappropriateness to the context. A number of these surprises and reversals have been described in earlier chapters. Rather than reiterate all of these, I describe several major expectations which were different from the results discovered and areas I expected to study but could or did not.

When I began this study, I expected to study a hallway that would not be active throughout the day. I suspected that much of the time there would be little or no activity, with activity peaking at the beginning and end of the day and possibly at the lunch hour. What I found is a hallway active the majority of the time, with a few dead periods in the morning. Although there are fairly high levels of activity at the three expected times, there were even higher levels of activity at other times, which were denoted major transition windows, notably the 10:00 morning break. The almost constant activity throughout the afternoon was unexpected, and the comparatively dead time just before the end of the school day on many days was a surprise--I suspected activity would gradually increase. The explosive bursts of hallway activity were also contrary to expectations, more overwhelming than I envisioned, if indeed I gave it thought at all before the study. All of these unexpected trends relate to my conclusion that the site studied was probably more ideal than typical for a school hallway, but this conclusion needs verification. My conclusion is based on brief, casual observation of only four other schools--two in Preissleville and two elsewhere--and my recollections of schools from childhood.

I expected to find two social formations; the line and cluster. I found three, these two and the phalanx. I also found several kinds of quasi-group formations, which I did not anticipate, as well as mixtures of the social formations. My expectations of two social formations came from earlier observations, as well as from reading the literature.

I expected that I might find patterns of teacher-student hallway movements related to dominance, as described by Herrera (1988). I did not observe the patterns he mentioned, although there may have been more subtle movement patterns that require microanalysis for discovery. This discrepancy may be due to different ages studied--he researched a middle school--or more idiosyncratic differences such as the specific teachers involved in his school or mine.

From my teaching courses on social problems, as well reading the literature related to hallways, I expected to find at least some indication of drugs, weapons, and perhaps even violence in the school. I recall several members of my committee asking what I would do if children needed intervention because of possibilities of physical harm, which may have reflected that expectation as well. I am pleasantly surprised that none of these was observed, although children did talk about bringing knives to school for nonviolent purposes. I found this particularly interesting considering that some of the children in the school come from communities known for violence. The hallways of Pellegrini elementary are safer than some of the communities in which the children live.

I expected to be able to study spacing between children, as some earlier researchers had done. This turned out to be impossible because there was no consistent reference for spacing. I thought I might be able to overhear some conversations so they could be analyzed, but I heard very little of hallway conversations because talking children were usually walking by and I could only hear part of what they said. Multiple microphones worn by children is probably the only realistic way of recording such conversations, a subject to be considered in detail later in this chapter.

I expected that children would act artificially at first and later come to ignore my presence and the videocamera. Although reaction to me and the camera was highest at the beginning of the study, it was not as strong as expected, and there continued to be some reaction to the very end, such as touching the camera or making a gesture into the lens as a child passed by. The reactivity day attempt was in general a failure in its intended purpose of decreasing such reactions.

Neat, distinct phases of study, as outlined in my research proposal, did not match the actual way the research was conducted. I anticipated this to an extent, allowing for changes by consulting with my major professors, but I did not expect to be pushed by the data as much as I was. I was surprised at how the phases I proposed as distinct and separated by time actually overlapped, with the exception of interviews subsequent to my observations. The data influenced my methodological decisions as I tried different ways of gathering data and found some that worked better than others. For example, the many locations for videotaping did not produce as much difference as did the variety of angles photographed from a prime location, across the hallway from the drinking fountains and restrooms. Carrying the camera helped me follow specific activities better, but was less than satisfactory for analyzing other activities after the fact because of the selective orientation. I learned a great deal about qualitative research using videotape.

I expected to see how children's groups were initiated, sustained, and terminated. These were often difficult to observe, particularly those things that sustain groupings, because of the verbalization involved. Without good audio equipment, which would have required fairly intrusive



involvement--such as placing microphones on selected children--I am left with only visual and more physical indications of the beginnings, endings, and events in between, as well as the interpretations of these events as understood by children. The social interactions of children as perceived through physical-visual observation and interviews are revealing, but I wish I had verbal transcripts of some of those interactions for comparison.

I anticipated studying the linkages between the classroom and the hallway. I did study these indirectly by interviewing children. They confirmed my expectation that children often left the room for reasons other than what they told teachers. Teachers told me that events in the hallway influenced the classroom behavior of children and classroom activities carried over to the hallway. However, much would be revealed by actually observing in a classroom and following children into the hallway to observe consequences. This would require participant observation. To have changed the study in this way would have resulted in a significant loss of information about the hallway in general; I would have been able to study only one classroom and would have missed the broader dynamic of the hallway that was my primary concern. The unit of study would have changed from the group to the individual. In addition this question did not fit the context of Pellegrini elementary as well as it might other schools--because of hourly changes of classrooms, children rarely left the room during a class period. Because I chose to focus on the hallway context, not specific class-hall linkages, future studies of the latter can build on the understanding of the breadth of behavior in the hallway, as well as the activities observed that are most salient to observers and children.

Originally I planned to observe at two different school sites. The school chosen was sufficiently complex, however, to take all the available time. Even comparisons with the early elementary hallway in the school were somewhat peripheral; the events in one school hallway are sufficiently complex and varied to require sustained attention and analysis. Other sites would have enriched the data and helped with external validity, but would also be extremely time consuming both in gathering data and analyzing the data obtained if the desired breadth was maintained. However, now that a broad study of the hall exists, future studies can concentrate on more focused aspects of hallway activities, producing comparisons with my findings in each specific area as well as contributing details and fuller understanding from more detailed analysis.

Expectations and findings were discrepant for many reasons, because of my personal characteristics and preferences, unanticipated aspects of the specific school context studied, and probably other reasons as well. I was far more impressed with how the research literature converged with findings than with discrepancies discovered. The surprises noted occasionally in previous chapters were indeed unanticipated discoveries.

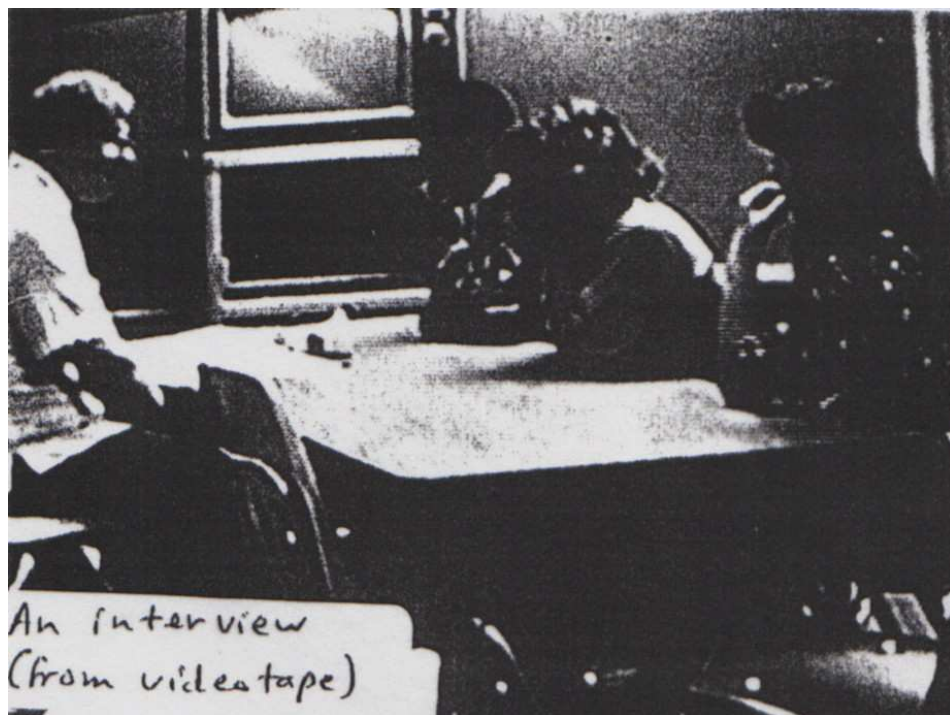
### **Strengths and Weaknesses of this Study**

Many of the weaknesses and strengths of qualitative study are noted in Chapter Two and occasionally mentioned in subsequent chapters. Here I address the strengths and weaknesses of my study in particular.

A weakness is that I studied only one site in one area of the United States. Are North Georgia children like other children? It is reasonable to expect them to be more similar to other children in the South than other areas of the United States and in turn to be more similar to other American children than youngsters in non-Western countries. But is this the case? Bronwyn Davies (1982) studied aboriginal children in Australia, and Kalekin-Fishman (1987) researched Israeli children, and I am impressed with the many commonalities of peer culture in these contexts with United States children. Yet ethnic, national, and geographical influences must not be ignored in attempting generalizations. External validity is not impossible with a single site study, as contextual similarities between the studied site and the site of application indicate common behavioral trends. However, generalization is even more likely when multiple sites are studied and similar results are obtained. On the other hand, a detailed study of a single site can also be a strength when many different aspects of a context are considered in detail. The richness of data from my single site may not be quickly and easily generalizable to other sites, although as has been argued previously, there may be more discoveries generalizable from an ideal site like Pellegrini elementary than from a more typical site; there is more to generalize. The geographical location studied influences findings, but decisions of school administrators and communities also affect schools and children in many ways. A weakness of this study is that I do not know exactly how these variations affected the results of the study. Follow-up research on school hallways in other

schools and other locations may help identify these distinctions more clearly.

I used one kind of interview for most of the study, the group interview. This has important limitations that have been considered previously. Needed are studies that include both group interviews and individual interviews so that these alternative approaches can be compared. Do children think about hallways differently when interviewed in groups in contrast with individual interviews? The little comparative evidence I have from individual member checks points toward an affirmative response, but this needs further methodological study.



Another possible weakness of this study is the primary reliance on one researcher. I did most of the videotaping, I wrote all of the observation notes, I did the interviews, and I performed nearly all of the analysis. As a result, the conclusions and the quotations selected to substantiate those conclusions are undoubtedly influenced by my assumptions and presuppositions. I believe reading the literature, as well as keeping open to the data, kept the results of my study from merely reflecting personal opinion. Multiple observers and multiple analysts would have increased the trustworthiness of the result.

The study was strengthened by the use of multiple methodologies. I incorporated both quantitative and qualitative paradigms in data gathering. Multiple qualitative methods were used: group interviews, individual member checks, in-vivo observing, observing videotapes, and to a minor extent artifact collection, such as taking children's pictures, photographing the hallway, and documents provided by administrators. I used multiple methods of analysis, some of which were better suited for some kinds of data than others.

My personal characteristics may also be considered a strength. As noted previously, my lack of elementary schoolteaching experience may have allowed me to see things that teachers at Pellegrini elementary take for granted. The ideal of the qualitative researcher making the normal appear strange is more likely because I am an outsider to public schools, yet my teaching future teachers at the college level and other aspects of my background helped me translate what seemed strange to something more familiar.

A final strength is the inclusion of other research studies for comparison and contrast. I believe I built on the work of many other researchers, most of whom studied children outside the hallway, but who researched aspects of children that can be observed in the hallway. I also built

from the theories and perspectives of my teachers; some of them I know and knew personally and others I met only through their written words. My research did not begin *ex nihilo*. I also benefited greatly from the assistance and suggestions of others throughout the data collection, analysis, and write up (see the Acknowledgements).

### **Recommendations for Schools**

At the conclusion of data collection at Pellegrini elementary I provided Mr. Martin, the principal, with some suggestions to consider for the school. I encouraged the provision of a recess period in which children can freely interact. In addition children can benefit from times of social interaction in the hallway. These recommendations may apply equally to other schools, not just to those similar to Pellegrini elementary. My suggestions have been derived not only from my research, but also the related literature and to some extent from the characteristics of most children in most social contexts.

I believe children need informal, casual interaction with one another. Peer culture is a reflection of the need for social relationships integral to human life. Unfortunately schools like Pellegrini elementary may inadequately provide opportunities for such interaction. Both recess and casual conversation in the hallway can help meet these needs. Time and again I saw teachers intervening to stop social interaction in the hallways and even during physical education classes; I suspect if this was commonplace outside the classroom, it was much more the case within the classroom. Children were discouraged from interacting.

Instead, teachers need to facilitate productive social interaction. Most children, I believe, can socially interact in a productive manner with only minimal intervention by adults. The break period is an ideal time to allow children to interact at Pellegrini elementary. At other schools other times of the day may be better. A recess break is another possible time for such interaction, although many older elementary children may spend that time with organized sports activities rather than less externally structured forms of social interaction. Consider the strong encouragement of peer interaction by Japanese teachers and parents to encourage their children's social skills development (Tobin, Wu, & Davidson, 1989).

What can be done about the few children who are unable to maintain self-control for informal social interaction? Social skills curricula are available that can be adapted for hallway settings. The goal of interventions with these youngsters is stimulating productive social interaction, rather than submission to adult authority that predominated at Pellegrini elementary. The place to begin with these children may be to practice what is learned in such curricula in the hallway, perhaps during a ten- to fifteen-minute break period.

Again, I wish to emphasize that adult intervention encouraging social interaction is only necessary for those children, a minority of children I believe, who need training in social skills. Most children can benefit from the opportunity for free interaction without adult guidance and direction, although some peripheral adult monitoring may be prudent. How can children learn to interact constructively unless they are given the opportunity to do so? It is imperative to move beyond disciplinary interventions to a larger perspective on what can be gained, socially and affectively as well as cognitively, in the school hallway.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This report constitutes a preliminary analysis of a large amount of data. This may be considered the infrastructure of a more complete summary of the events in and perceptions of one school's hallway. In the future I want to return to my data to develop a more complete analysis. When this study was initiated, I was careful to obtain permission to archive the audiotape and videotape data acquired for future analysis by other persons representing other perspectives. In this way multiple observer triangulation is possible.

I also hope others will become interested in what happens in hallways and other public thoroughfares. School hallways differ considerably from one another, as my brief comparison revealed, when attempting to decide which school to study, of the three Preissleville schools. The literature also indicates differences among hallways, as has been noted throughout this work. Comparisons and contrasts among schools can yield further conclusions about how generalizable some of my findings may be. In addition, varying the methods of investigation, such as interviewing children independently, may also prove to be fruitful in revealing differences. Would

multiple cameras and interviewers capture more varied data?

Hallway events may come to be viewed as significant for research investigations because violence and illegal drugs are prominent in many school hallways, although these concerns did not prompt my study. Other peripheral areas of the school, such as restrooms, drinking fountains, and cafeterias, may also become areas for serious study for the same reasons. Public spaces, such as the school hallway, may be contrasted with more private school places, such as restrooms. More research is needed on the peripheral areas of school, not only because of the concern for violence and drugs in schools, but also because of their distinctive interfacing between school and peer cultures. Perhaps they are distinctive cultural contexts of their own, as is the hallway. Each of these contexts has interesting methodological and ethical challenges, such as the issue of privacy in studying children's conversations in restrooms.

Additional attention needs to be given to the hallway as a possible context for learning. Could a game be invented in which children are given points and perhaps rewards for including a generally excluded child in a cluster or phalanx, such as a child of the opposite sex, a different race child, or an unpopular child? Would such a game produce temporary or long-term changes in attitudes and behaviors? Might displays of rocks, books, and other items be used in the hallway to encourage interest in related subject matter in the classroom? How do the results of formal teaching in the hallway, observed only once in the early elementary hallway, compare with classroom teaching? Do children learn more by studying in the hallway, something I saw often in the older elementary hallway? Are adults more distracted by hallway noises than children, both in and out of the classroom? These are questions amenable to research.

Hallways within and outside schools are interesting contexts worthy of further study because most everyone in Western nations has numerous experiences and impressions of hallways. Hallways are a central feature of modern architecture. Needed are studies of hallways in other contexts, such as malls, aisles of grocery stores, hallways for business offices or apartment buildings, or home hallways. How is the behavior of children in these hallways similar to and distinctive from school hallways? Do the activities and social formations of adults and children differ systematically in all these locations? It seems odd to me that there is so little research on such an often-frequented but little-known location.

Researchers and others also need to consider further the influence of the physical environment of the school hallway. Do posters and student art embarrass older elementary children or do they instill pride and self-esteem? A few comments were made by children about defacing such art, but I *saw* little evidence of this. Why does defacing occur and what does it represent about school learning? Is this a ritual of resistance as noted in the preceding chapter, an indication that children are reacting to excessive control by teachers and administrators? Does the presence or kind of artwork and other hallway decorations have any influence on behavior or attitudes? Do posters and signs influence children in the way intended, such as an anti-smoking poster changing attitudes toward the use of tobacco? Does the color of walls or lighting affect behavior or moods of children?

The effect of gender surfaced during my study and might be considered in future research. I found that the desire for freedom or order varied to some extent by gender, with some girls--all of them white in my study--expressing gratitude for the order imposed by teachers, while most boys and some girls emphasized that the restrictions were excessive and they desired greater freedom in the hallway. This difference varied by age and grade level as well as sex and race, and certainly there were variations between teachers and students in this respect. This idea deserves further research within the context of theories and other studies of gender and race differences.

Another area for potential examination is children's behavior when alone in the hallway. Solitude in public sounds like being a "stranger in a crowd." How are children different when alone in the hall in contrast with children in social formations and in quasi-group formations? This is an entirely different area from that considered in the present research, but worthy of investigation.

Other methods than what I have used can contribute to a fuller understanding of hallway events as well. As suggested previously, a researcher might take a strong participant observer role, to some extent participating in school culture in the classroom and then following the children to the hallway and taking part in or at least closely observing peer culture. The literature indicates that adults can rarely if ever participate fully in children's peer culture, yet a participant role can be approximated with considerable effort. See Baker (1985) for a description of the lengthy initiation required by children for one researcher to partially enter peer culture. Through such participant

observation, the linkages between classroom and hallway activities could more clearly be identified.

Experimental approaches can also provide distinctive insight by manipulating different aspects of the hallway environment. I conducted a brief experiment of variations in hallway control described previously (Ratcliff, 1993). Similarly Staub (1987) compared effects of different kinds of feedback to students on their hallway behavior. Many aspects of hallway behavior are amenable to controlled variation, although there are well-known threats to validity with overly intrusive manipulations. Experimental and naturalistic methods not only complement one another, but results from each can provide insights that may reveal how the other can best be used.

A number of other experiments might be considered. For example, does assigning children a place in line increase or decrease violations of line rules in contrast with self-chosen line positions? Do children change interaction patterns when several different grades are in the hall at once rather than only one grade at a time; for example, can grade hierarchies be revealed or delimited in this respect? Might varying the time of break or providing or modifying background music affect student behavior in the hall?

Most individuals in Western nations attend schools that have hallways. Thus the majority of people have numerous experiences and impressions of these locations. Are our attitudes about school hallways more affected by our experiences or other sources of influence? A friend of mine noted that many old television sitcoms, like "Leave it to Beaver," portray school situations primarily in the hallway. News programs and magazine reports sometimes describe violence in hallways. Are our opinions about school hallways formed as much from these dramatizations and reports as our own personal experiences? A pretest-posttest design could reveal short-term and long-term attitude change about hallways by children after watching different television programs involving hallways. Perhaps a similar experiment could examine attitude change from a magazine article about violence in school hallways.

The phalanxes and clusters discovered in this study deserve further exploration. The systematic gathering of the same children may reflect friendship patterns, although Verenne's (1982) research on high school cliques suggests that such friendships are not as stable as commonly thought and the boundaries of friendship patterns are unclear. As noted previously, Davies (1982) also comments on the fluidity of friendships at the elementary level. How do the groupings of children in the hallway compare with individual preferences of youngsters for specific children, at least at some point in time if such preferences and gatherings are not stable across time?

Capturing verbalizations of children in a hallway is perplexing with present technology. Wireless microphones may be advantageous to discovering interactions among children, but I suspect that many hours of recording would be required to obtain significant data in a school such as Pellegrini elementary because the percentage of children engaging in social formations at any one time is often quite low. Would older elementary children be more conscious of wireless microphones than younger children studied in this manner? This is a question worthy of research, and one location for such research is the school hallway. Another possibility is the use of extremely directional microphones designed for long-distance reception, such as are used in professional broadcasting.

Finally, in what ways does change in videotape methods change the data collected? For example, how would data change if children videotaped hallway behavior in contrast with adult videotaping? Does the inferred meaning of videotape content change by who does the analysis, and if so how does that meaning vary? I envision the possibility of two researchers observing different videotapes taken from different angles of the same social formations. Not only would this provide clearer reliability data, but it also could reveal the limitations and strengths of camera placements. Several times during my study I considered the potential value of several videocameras mounted from the ceiling and how they might reveal much more than one camera on a tripod.

Much remains to be done in the study of school hallways. As noted previously, this study is only a beginning to what I hope will be a new interest in hallways and other nonclassroom areas of schools. It is important that a wide variety of methods be used in the quest to understand hallway behavior so that most of the possible aspects will be considered.

School hallways are important places for children. Hallways reflect both school and peer cultures, interfacing with one another, with one or the other emerging from time to time as predominant. The social interaction that takes place in the school hallway may have an influence on children that may transfer to other places and times throughout life.

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## APPENDIX A

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The questions I used to frame interviews are included in this appendix. Not every question was used in every interview. Questions were not always asked as worded here; these questions were guidelines; and occasionally they were asked in a different order.

#### Children's Interviews

##### First session: Introduction

Introduce or clarify my role -- I will be writing a book about your school hallways, and will emphasize how *you* see things. A big part of the book is about you. I want to understand and describe your views correctly. You won't get into trouble no matter what you say; I won't play the tape for the teachers or the principal, I'll use it to better remember what you say. I won't tell who said what.

1A. Brainstorm about all the things you have ever seen in the hallway. Describe as many things as you can remember. Is this common or rare?

1B. What are the purposes of the things that happen?

1C. How does doing these things make you feel?

2. What do you call some of the areas of the hall?

3A. What are the rules of the hall? What rules do teachers tell them? Are there other rules and what are they?

3B. What is the purpose or reason/s for rules? Specifically ask about line rules. What rules should be followed all the time? What rules don't you like?

3C. What rules do you think it is ok to break sometimes? When should they be broken?

3D. Does the teacher being nearby make a difference? What teachers could be present and yet they would break a rule? Which rules?

3E. Do some grades break more rules than others? Which grades and which rules? Why?

4. List all the ways teacher control and monitor kids in the hall.

5. Why do kids sometimes act as if teacher is present when she isn't?

6. Do teachers ignore misbehavior of boys more or girls more?

7. What are all the different reasons for going into the hall?

8. Who is the toughest or strongest in their homeroom, next toughest, and so on.

9. What is the most important thing they said during the session today.

Next time we will look at some videotapes, and you may be in some of them.

##### Second Session: Lines

Are any other things that happen in the hallway they did not tell me last time, or anything you wished you had said differently? Your views are a big part of the book, so I want to get those ideas right.

(Watch a videotape of lines in the hallway)

1. Describe what is happening as you watch.

2. What are the purposes (reasons, goals) of what happens?

(After videotape is ended)

1. Talk about what lines mean. Would you rather be in a line in the hall or not? Why?

2. Who would you like to have next to you in line? Who would you not like to have next to you?

3. What are your feelings when you are in line?

4. Where in line would you rather be? Why? Would it be different if the class was going to class in contrast to P.E.?

5. Are lines different when a teacher is around? Which teacher/s and why?

6. What are all the things that can happen in a line? (take some time for brainstorming on this).

7. Do you think the lines you have seen are typical and normal, or unusual? Why?

8. What is the most important thing you have said during the session to better understand kids? Why did you choose those things as most important? Why are they important to you? What do they mean to you?

9. Who are the most popular kids of opposite sex? If had a party and invited five (boys/girls --

opposite sex), who would they be (list in order)?

10. What does the hallway mean to you?

### **Third session: Phalanxes**

What you tell me is really important -- I want to understand your thoughts and ideas.

1. Is there anything you want to add or correct from the previous time?

2. (Show a videotape of phalanxes, including, if possible, one they are in, and one they are not in.)

What is happening? What are the reasons/purpose of what happens? Do you have a name for those rows of people? (use that term hereafter)

3. Would you rather be in a row in the hall or not? Why?

4. What are your feelings when you are in a row?

5. Where in a row would you rather be (middle, end, which end)? Why?

6. Are rows different when a teacher is around? Which teacher/s and why?

7. Who would you like to have with you in a row? (from the homeroom class) Who would you not want to be near in a row?

8. What are all the things that can happen in a row? (Take time for their answers to this.)

9. Are the rows seen typical and normal, or are they unusual? Why?

10. What do rows in the hall mean to you? How do you think about them?

11. What is the most important thing you said to me today? Why?

### **Fourth session: Clusters and crowds**

1. Is there anything you want to add or correct from last time?

(Watch a videotape of clusters -- call them "groups")

What is happening? What are the reasons/purposes?

2. How are groups different from the rows we saw last time? How are they the same?

3. Would you rather be in a group in the hall or not? Why?

4. What are your feelings when you are in a hall group?

5. What's it like to be in a group? What does being in a group mean to you?

6. Are groups different when a teacher is around? Which teacher/s?

7. What are all the things that can happen in a group? (brainstorm)

8. Do you think the groups you have seen are typical and normal, or unusual? Why?

(Show videotape segment of crowds -- name it as a crowd)

9. What's the difference between a group and a crowd? How they the same?

10. What's it like to be in a crowd? What does a crowd mean to you?

11. What is the most important thing they said during the session today?

12. We're going to have a tour of the hallway for the camera. We will go around the hall talking about it. The leader will talk about it first, then ask the rest of you questions about the hall. Choose the leader, then we'll start. (Have children take turns leading.)

### **Fifth session: Member check**

1. Are there any other things you have thought about that happen in the hallways you have not told me before?

2. Anything you wish you had said differently?

3. I'm going to tell you about some of the things I've seen and heard over the last few weeks. People don't always see things the same way, so I want you to disagree with me all you want to. So when I ask you if you think of it this way, tell me if I'm wrong or don't have it quite right. Make it clearer for me.

A. I think a lot of kids want more freedom and fewer rules in the hall. But some kids think the rules and teachers being in control is a good thing. Do you think there are both kinds of kids? Do girls and boys think differently about this? Do black and white kids think differently about this? Some kids think the hall is a free place, others think of it like a prison, and still others are afraid to go in the hall. Do you think there are all three kinds of kids? Tell me about it.

B. When kids call others names or put each other down, are they trying to show who is boss or who is more powerful? Or is there another reason?

C. When I had kids talk into the microphone in the hallway, many wanted to do it in the

kindergarten hallway. Is that because you are bigger than those kids? Or because you could get even by talking loud there and you couldn't when you were in school there? Or because you remembered the fun of recess back then? Another reason?

D. Some kids thought that rows (side by side) and groups in the hall were the same thing; they just look different and you walk in rows. Are they basically the same thing? Explain.

E. A lot of kids don't like to be first in line because the teacher will see you easier. But they like being first to go outside. True? Explain.

F. When kids are in line, girls stay farther from boys than from each other. True? Talk about it.

G. Does play fighting in older kids take the place of touching and holding hands seen in little kids? Can you tell me more?

H. I think kids act silly when they are closer to a camera than when they are further away. True? Are they sillier in front of the camera if with friends?

I. I think teachers show their power in the hall by carrying a paddle, staring at kids, giving lectures, giving punishments, and leaning towards misbehaving kids with their bodies. True? Are there other ways they show their power?

J. Here are some ways kids have talked about the hall. If you agree with one of these, tell me more about it. Prison. Family. Highway. Herds of buffalo (especially sixth graders).

K. Maybe schools help kids get ready for jobs. For example, signs tell you who has perfect attendance and who does good work (honor roll). Your break time is like a break at a job. Is this true? Tell me more.

4. What is the most important thing you said here today?

5. What is the most important thing I said today?

6. Do you think you changed your actions in the hall because we had these sessions? Can they give examples?

7. Do you think others changed the way they acted because of my being here? Examples? Did the camera make a difference? What was it?

8. Who do you think I am most like? A friend? A teacher? A kind of grown up kid? Or something else?

9. Is there anything else you'd like to say?

### Teacher Interviews

You don't have to answer any questions you don't want to, but your identity will be held in confidence.

1. What are some of the most common things you observe regularly in the hallway?

2. What are some of the most unusual things you have seen in the hallway? Give feelings and reactions.

3. Do you think the things that happen in the hall affect kids' attitudes towards school? How and why? Examples? Or are hallway activities insignificant?

4. Do things that happen in the halls affect what happens in your classroom? If so, in what way do those events affect children's attitudes and actions? Do things that occur in the classroom get carried into the hall? Examples?

5. What rules do you tell kids to follow in the hallway? Are there ever any exceptions to those rules? If so, when? Are there special line rules or rules in the rest room?

6. Are there some grades or teachers that are more lax on hallway rules? Who or what grades? Who is the strictest?

7. Do teachers ignore the misbehavior of girls or boys more?

8. Who do you think is the toughest/most dominant kid in class? Next toughest? (etc.) Who do you think is the most popular kid in class? Next most? (etc.) Are there any romantic pairs?

9. What reasons do kids give for leaving the room alone or in a small group? Do you give special instructions when they leave alone or in small group?

10. Sometimes kids form rows, side by side, instead of lines. Do you feel this is a problem or a good thing? Why? Is there any special meaning you see in such rows? (If teachers seems stumped, say rebelling or anti-school attitude?)

11. Sometimes kids will cluster together in a circle or semicircle in the hall, usually to talk. Do you feel this is a good thing or a problem? Why? Is there any special meaning to such groups?

12. How do you think kids feel about lines? How do *you* feel about them? What do they *mean* to you? (For example, obedience?)

13. Does your presence or absence have an effect on what kids do in the hall? What effect might there be? Are there other things that make your presence have different effects? (Such as time of day.)

14. What are all the ways you monitor what kids do in the hallway?

15. What are all the punishments you use for misbehavior in the hallway? What punishments do you think should not be used?

16. Kids sometimes use metaphors to describe the hallway. Examples: highway, prison, family, herds of buffalo. What metaphor do you think fits best? (feel free to create a new one). Describe how the metaphor fits.

18. What are some of the types of kids *as you see them*? Describe the kids I had in groups (provide teacher with names of their kids who were interviewed).

The following questions are not the main thing I'm studying, they are a way of getting some background to better understand you and your kids more generally.

1. Number of kids in your class.

2. Races of your kids (percent or number).

3. What socioeconomic classes are represented? (percent or number).

4. Ages of the kids at the end of the year.

5. Do you consider the kids to be cooperative? (percent or number).

6. Are kids tracked at different levels? Which subjects?

7. Generalizations about home environments of your kids:

Blended families?

Single parent families?

Other family issues and problems

8. Percent of turnover of classroom population in the year.

9. Your background:

Years of experience.

A bit about your family & where they lived.

10. Career expectations for the children in your class.

11. Describe your style of teaching and your role with kids.

12. Perceptions of (Preissleville), especially the portion of (Preissleville) served by the school.

13. Do you feel you are more controlled or autonomous as a teacher?

14. Do you feel the leaders of the school are more traditional, progressive, or is another term a better description?

We've talked about your kids, and about you. Now a couple of questions about me.

1. Have things changed much in the hallway because of the camera, my assistant, or me? In what ways?

2. How do teachers see me? A threat? A hindrance? A helper? Some other role?

3. Anything else you'd like to say?

Now I'd like to talk about some things I've found in my research -- but please disagree all you wish; I may not understand these things accurately. These are very *tentative* ideas of what I think may be happening.

A. Teacher seems most responsible for the group in her room or group that just left it. There is somewhat less responsibility for other groups at her grade level and about the same level of responsibility for class of entrymate (even if a different grade level). There is even less responsibility for other grade levels. Perhaps teachers are least responsible for other grade levels in the other wing. True? Is there more to it than this?

B. From interviews, I think a lot of kids want more freedom and fewer rules in the hall. But some kids think the rules and teachers being in control are good things. Do you think there are both kinds of kids? Do girls and boys think differently about this? Do black and white kids think differently about this? I think some kids think the hall is a free place, others think of it like a prison, and still others are afraid to go into the hall. Do you think there are all three kinds of kids?

C. When kids call others names or put each other down, are they trying to show who is



boss or who is more powerful? Or is there another reason?

D. When I had kids talk into the microphone in the hallway, many wanted to do it in the kindergarten hallway. Is that because they are bigger than those kids? Or because they could get even by talking loud there and they couldn't when they were in school there? Or because they remembered the fun of recess back then? Is there another reason?

E. Some kids seemed to think that rows (side by side) and groups in the hall were the same thing; they just look different and they *walk* in rows. Are they basically the same thing?

F. I think a lot of kids don't like to be first in line because the teacher will see them easier. But they like being first to go outside. True?

G. I think when kids are in line, girls stay further from boys than from each other, and vice versa. True? Why?

H. Does play fighting in older kids take the place of touching and holding hands seen in little kids? Is play fighting more tolerable in girls? Why?

I. I think kids act sillier when they are closer to a camera than when they are further away. True? Are they sillier in front of the camera if with friends?

J. I think teachers show their authority in the hall by carrying a paddle, staring at kids, giving lectures or sermons, giving punishments, and leaning towards misbehaving kids with their bodies. True? Are there other ways they show their authority?

K. One of the things school does is help kids get ready for jobs. Do hallway signs do this indirectly? For example, signs tell you who has perfect attendance and who does good work (honor roll). Break time is kind of like a break at a job. Is this true? Does it prepare them for certain kinds of jobs more than others?

L. What is the most important thing you said here today? What is the most important thing I said today? Is there anything else you'd like to say?

### Principal Interview

1) *The community* -- region, unemployment, ethnicity, social class, social services, family characteristics, politics, religion, occupations, population turnover, style and quality of buildings, size of city/town, views of education, career expectations for children, maps of community.

2) *The school system/district* -- ethnicity represented, social class. Parent involvement in the school.

3) *School buildings* -- architecture, physical locations of rooms, hallways, offices, & playground. Drawings/maps available?

4) *Organization of school* -- socially, organizationally.

5) *History of school*.

6) *Leadership of school* -- ethnicity, progressive/traditional. Own professional and school experience and family background.

7) *Annual schedule of events*. Rule book available? Yearbook?

8) *Classroom* -- physical description, drawings/maps, relation to rest of school or other teachers.

9) *Teachers & other staff* -- ethnicity, background, perceptions of community, career expectations of children, interactions with one another and children, degree of autonomy, years of experience.

10) *Students* --

1) race/ethnicity

2) grade level/age

3) degree of cooperativeness/other reactions

4) academic track/s

5) student/teacher ratio/s

6) types of students

7) home environment

8) number of students

9) common past experiences kids have had with peers

10) socioeconomic statuses

(I also summarized items A through L under the teacher member check for his reactions.)

## APPENDIX B

### VIDEO DATA SHEETS

The data sheets used to transcribe videotape data are included in this appendix. Initially I attempted to document or code all of the categories on these protocols. However, I found that some categories could not be regularly encoded, such as line spacing--my estimates of distance were unreliable. Another example is statements; it was rare when any amount of talking could be heard on the videotape, therefore the category "line-relevant teacher/adult statements" could not be coded. Consequently, when data consistently could not be obtained for a category, I stopped attempting to code it. None of the data from dropped categories were included in subsequent analysis.

#### Lines

Date:                      Time Segment Began:                      Time Segment Ended:

Grade Level:                      Origin:                      Destination:

Line Order by Sex:

Line Order by Ethnicity:

Line Spacing by Sex:

different while moving vs. stopped?

Line Spacing/Ethnicity:

different while moving vs. stopped?

Non-uniform parameters

segment not straight:

segment changes structure:

one or more leave line:

one or more at different speed:

Teacher present (where?):

Other adult (where?)

Line-relevant teacher/adult statements:

Line-relevant teacher/adult actions:

Child interaction:

Talking w/adult or child:

Touching adult or child:

affection

aggression

R & T

Other significant events/behavior/impressions:

#### Phalanxes and clusters

When it occurs:

How long it lasts:

Location/context:

Number of people involved:

Stable or fluid membership:

Order of joining:

How it is initiated:

How it is sustained:

Did it change to another social formation?:

How it is terminated:

Sequences of movements/talking/activities:

Consequences/related events:

Teacher presence/absence effects:

Movement patterns:

intersections:

Reversals:

Touches:  
Run/walk:  
Stationary stand/sit:  
Apparent purposes/goals:  
Gender:  
Membership:  
Position:  
Spacing:  
Speech:  
Ethnicity:  
Membership:  
Position:  
Spacing: